

Entre Nous.

Professor Sanday's article 'Bible.'

THERE is a fine review of the second volume of THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS in the *Guardian* for the 1st of April. Here are the last two paragraphs :

'For the student of Christian theology, however, the two most important contributions to the volume are those headed "Bible," by Dr. Sanday, and "Bible in the Church," by Dr. von Dobschütz, of Strasburg. The latter fills some seventy columns, and is a monument of learning. Written in a spirit of true reverence for the Bible, it will attract many readers, and the admirable arrangement of the several sections, as well as the directness and simplicity of the style, will enhance its usefulness. Dr. Sanday's article extends to about half the length of Dr. von Dobschütz's, is written freely, and not overburdened with references. We have read it twice, and we know of nothing which, in anything like the same space, provides so clear and impressive an account of the attitude which the best Christian scholarship in our day assumes in reference to Holy Scripture. It will be a great pity if this essay is not published separately, for it would be a real service to the Christian Faith in England to ensure its wide circulation. To say this is to say much, but to say less would not be just.

'It remains to add that Dr. Hastings has again been fortunate in securing the co-operation of at least one leading Roman Catholic divine. The Rev. Herbert Thurston, S.J., supplies a learned paper touching "Bulls and Briefs," a subject on which he is eminently qualified to write. It is of course historical, not controversial, and the bibliographical information which he gives will be useful to those who are engaged in research :—

"It is generally held," he points out, "by (Roman) Catholic theologians that the mere fact of an encyclical being addressed to the whole of Christendom does not constitute it an *ex cathedrâ* pronouncement, even if it deals with dogmatic matters. The degree in which the infallible *magisterium* of the Papacy is involved must be judged from the terms used

in the document itself and from attendant circumstances."

The last-mentioned test leaves a way open, as some will hope, for a reconsideration by the Vatican of some utterances, at least, which have been generally regarded by the Roman Church as fortified by infallible authority.'

Point and Illustration.

Vulgarity.

Under the title of 'Along the Road,' Mr. Arthur C. Benson has an article every week in the *Church Family Newspaper*. The subject for April 1st was Vulgarity.

Mr. Benson says there are two kinds of vulgarity, the one a superficial and harmless thing, the other a rank and deep-seated quality of soul. 'I remember once,' he says, 'being told by a lady who did a great deal of philanthropic work, that the most curious etiquette prevailed in some of the houses she used to visit about behaviour at meals. At one house, in drinking tea, the spoon had to be put in the cup and held firmly against the side of it with the forefinger, while the little finger had to be held out away from the cup with an air of graceful detachment. At another house, when you had drunk all the tea you cared to drink, you turned your cup upside down in the saucer. The two households appeared to be of exactly the same social standing; but my friend found out that the spoonholders considered the inversion of the cup to be vulgar, while the inverters thought spoonholding to be pretentious. The odd thing is that one should be amused by this, and think both practices alike absurd, when one is oneself just as exacting in the use of the knife. I should consider that it would be a sign of inferior breeding for a man to shovel green peas into his mouth with a knife, however convenient; and I suppose that a man who naturally used his knife so would consider my prodding and dawdling with a fork under the same circumstances to be simply affectation.'

That is the superficial kind of vulgarity. Then he gives examples of the deep-seated kind.

'Some of the most innately vulgar people I have known have been people of irreproachable courtesy and demeanour; but one gradually perceives that their standard is all wrong, that they put the wrong values on people, that they do not like men and women because they are likeable or interesting, but because they are important. The man who keeps one kind of geniality for a countess and another for a farmer's wife is very hard to respect. There is no sort of reason why a man should migrate from one class to another. If he is born an earl, there is no harm in his consorting with earls; but he must not treat an offensive earl with courtesy, and an inoffensive farmer with discourtesy. There is a pleasant old story of a duke who got into a railway compartment occupied by another duke and a commercial traveller. He talked affably with both. When he got out, the commercial traveller, impressed by the respect with which he was received at the station, inquired of one of the porters who he was, and on hearing the fact, said genially to the other duke, "Now, that's what I call a gentleman! To think of his sitting here, hobnobbing with a couple of snobs like you and me." One only wishes that one could have heard his further reflexions when his other fellow-traveller left him, and he discovered his identity as well.'

The Eastern Atmosphere.

Two things have to be done for the reader of the Bible before he can make right profitable use of it. He must be made to understand first that it is the translation of a book from an Eastern language into a Western; and next, that the English translation itself is ancient and antiquated. Does any man among us, unlearned or learned, realize what three centuries have done to the language of the English Bible? That they have put some words out of use altogether is a small part of their effect. The serious situation is that they have slightly shifted the emphasis or slightly altered the meaning of an innumerable number of words. But it is not about the antiquated English that we have something to say at present. It is about the Eastern language in which the Bible was originally written.

We say Eastern language. For although the New Testament has come to us in Greek, it is the Greek of the East and not of the West. It is the Greek of men who continued to think in Hebrew,

although they wrote in Greek. The Greek language of the New Testament is like a palimpsest with the upper writing a translation of the under. Before we can understand it we must get at the unseen Aramaic that lies below.

In the *Sunday at Home*, the Rev. G. Wauchope Stewart has begun some popular studies of the Eastern ways of thinking that lie below the language of the Bible. 'If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me' (Ps 139^{9, 10}). How much the verses gain in significance when we realize that to the Jew, in virtue of his geographical situation, the sea stood for the west! The morning, of course, represents the east, the direction of sunrise, and the wings of the morning refers to the rapidity with which the morning light flies through the heavens. So that the sense of the passage is: 'If I could fly with the rapidity of light from the one end of the world to the other, from extreme east to extreme west, even then I could not escape from Jehovah.'

'O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?' (Mt 3⁷). The word sounds harsh to us, and it is probable that, not knowing the local association, we do the Baptist injustice. The reference is probably to a scene familiar enough to the hearers. In order to prepare the ground for the plough it is customary to set fire to the stubble, which is left much higher than with us. When the fields are thus ablaze, the serpents which have been lurking in the long stubble may be seen wriggling out, trying to escape. So the word 'vipers' was a natural word to use, and the emphasis is not on it, but on the effort to escape from the wrath to come.

'Doth he not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness?' (Lk 15⁴). To our minds the wilderness does not suggest safety. It seems rather to be the place where the single sheep may be found which has gone astray. But the word 'wilderness' was used to denote tracts of land quite suitable for pasture, with sheep folds and even human habitations. The five thousand were fed in the wilderness, and yet they were commanded to sit down upon the green grass.

'Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands' (Is 49¹⁶). It was the practice of the worshipper to mark the name or sign of his god on his body, to remind him of his duty towards

him. Here by a bold anthropomorphism the position is reversed, and instead of the worshipper marking the name of his god upon his hands, it is Jehovah who is represented as marking Jerusalem upon His hands, as a reminder, so to speak, of her desperate plight. It is a most beautiful and comforting assurance of the love of God.

For a Season.

This is the topic of a sermon by the Rev. Thomas Spurgeon which is published in *The Sword and Trowel* for April. The first text is from Ec 3¹, 'To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.' The word season, says Mr. Spurgeon, suggests the due time—the time for harvest or for snow. And what is life but a succession of seasons? But the word 'season' also stands for the convenient time. A word spoken in season, how good it is. That is introductory.

The next text is He 11²⁵, 'Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.' So sin has its pleasures. And just because it is fascinating is it dangerous. The pleasures of sin have to be superseded by higher pleasures. But the pleasures of sin are only for a season. The joys of the ungodly are like the crackling of thorns under a pot. That is the old simile. Mr. Spurgeon's own modern one is that they are like the Crystal Palace fireworks, beautiful while they last, but leaving the night blacker.

The third text is Jn 5³⁵, 'He was a burning and a shining light, and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.' It is the word of Christ concerning those who listened with some interest to John the Baptist. They listened until he began to speak of repentance. Then the audience lost their interest and began to melt away. So the new preacher is almost always sure of an audience until he begins to lay the axe at the root of the tree.

The fourth text is Lk 4¹³, 'And when the devil had ended all the temptation he departed from him for a season.' When did he return? Mr. Spurgeon thinks that between the temptation in the Wilderness and the agony in the Garden Satan was busy with the Son of God all the time. If he did not appear in person he used the lawyers or such like to 'catch Him in His words.' He thinks that Satan was never so busy, for he knew it was

now or never. Still, Satan left Him for a season. Christ had at least some respite from temptation. No doubt he pretended to have left Him altogether. He makes this pretence with us when we have beaten him once. And if we have beaten him off without seeing that his place is occupied by a better, he will come in stronger force, and our last state may be worse than our first.

The last text is 1 Peter 1⁶, 'Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.' If need be, thank God for that. Nothing happens by chance to God's people. And the manifold temptations are not the temptations of the devil just spoken about. They are the trials of life, and accordingly the season now is the season of life itself. How short it is compared with the eternity of the weight of glory that is to follow.

Worthily.

In the April issue of the *Missionary Record* of the United Free Church of Scotland, there is a study by the Rev. Adam Philip, M.A., Longforgan, of the word 'worthily.'

There are three occurrences of the word—Ro 16², Ph 1²⁷, 3 Jn 6. But Wyclif is the only one, says Mr. Philip, of all the great English translators who translates the Greek word consistently. The A.V. gives Ro 16² 'as becometh saints,' Ph 1²⁷ 'as it becometh the gospel,' 3 Jn 6 'after a godly sort.' R.V. has Ro 16² 'worthily of the saints,' Ph 1²⁷ 'as it becometh the gospel,' 3 Jn 6 'worthily of God.' Wyclif translates 'worthili to seyntis,' 'worthili to the gospel,' 'worthili to God.'

1. 'Worthily of the Saints,' or, as Dr. Sanday would put it, 'worthily of the Church.' This is an ideal of life. When Dean Lake was asked to give his impressions of Dr. Arnold of Rugby, he wrote: 'I should say in two words that he impressed upon us above everything the blessing of high ideals and of decided convictions.' This, then, is the first high ideal—to live worthily of the Church. For the Christian Church represents at once the noblest fellowship, the highest character, and the loftiest service.

2. 'Worthily of the gospel.' What is the standard of life that the gospel sets before us? The gospel is the grace of God in Christ. To live worthily of the gospel is to be tender with

its tenderness, to be steadfast as its truth, to know and to exhibit the grace of Jesus Christ.

3. 'Worthily of God.' This is from the Third Epistle of John, which is a missionary letter. John says we should encourage the missionary by setting him forward on his journey worthily of God. For he is fulfilling God's purpose, he is carrying God's power. To encourage the missionary worthily of God is to recognize him to be a fellow-worker with God. We need what Mazzini called the tug of the ideal to disturb our self-complacency and content, and to enable us to hear God's command and see God's glory, as Polycarp finely expresses it.

Serving and Seeing.

It were not hard, we think, to serve Him,

If we could only see!

If He would stand with that gaze intense

Burning into our bodily sense,

If we might look on that face most tender,

The brows where the scars are turned to splendour;

Might catch the light of His smile so sweet,

And view the marks on His hands and feet,

How loyal we should be!

It were not hard, we think, to serve Him,

If we could only see!

It were not hard, He says, to see Him,

If we would only serve:

'He that doeth the will of heaven,

To him shall knowledge and sight be given.'

While for His presence we sit repining,

Never we see His countenance shining;

They who toil where His reapers be

The glow of His smile may always see,

And their faith can never swerve.

It were not hard, He says, to see Him,

If we would only serve.

The Great Text Commentary.

The best illustration this month has been found by the Rev. Donald Grigor, Walkerburn, to whom a copy of Walker's *Gospel of Reconciliation* will be sent.

Illustrations for the Great Text for June must be received by the 1st of May. The text is Rev 22^{3, 4}.

The Great Text for July is Rev 22¹⁴—'Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city.' A copy of Walker's *The Spirit and the Incarnation*, or Downer's *Mission and Ministration of the Holy Spirit*, or Oswald Dykes's *Christian Minister and his Duties*, will be given for the best illustration.

The Great Text for August is Rev 22¹⁷—'And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely.' A copy of Gordon's *Early Traditions of Genesis*, or of Scott's *Pauline Epistles*, or of Walker's *Gospel of Reconciliation*, will be given for the best illustration.

The Great Text for September is Ps 1³—'And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also doth not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.' A copy of Clarke's *Sixty Years with the Bible*, or Adams's *Israel's Ideal*, or Downer's *Mission and Ministration of the Holy Spirit*, will be given for the best illustration.

The Great Text for October is Ps 4⁶:

'Many there be that say, Who will shew us any good?

Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.'

A copy of Clarke's *Outline of Christian Theology*, or Clarke's *Sixty Years with the Bible*, or Inge's *Faith and Knowledge*, will be given for the best illustration.

Those who send illustrations should at the same time name the books they wish sent them if successful.

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