

may be obtained as to the ancient copy of the Pentateuch still cherished among the treasures of the Samaritans. Many will join in Dr. Geikie's wish that the desire of the high-priest for a teacher, who should enter with interest upon a very difficult task, may be realized. Those who hope much from the sagacity and interest already shown by Bishop Blyth in his great enterprise may reasonably, we think, expect that he will find opportunity for approaching these interesting remnants of a forgotten religious body. Dr. Geikie gives a most encouraging account of the famous missions at Beirut. Great care is evidently taken in the preparation of native preachers. One of the students of this college was ordained by Bishop Hannington in 1885—not "1855," as it stands in a book wonderfully free from misprint.

We have said enough to indicate the high opinion we entertain of Dr. Geikie's work. Every year as it passes seems to increase the interest of all thoughtful students of Scripture in the questions of sacred geography and Biblical illustration. Multitudes of tourists are now to be found on the Nile, in the Desert, and the Holy Hills, and no doubt a cheap edition of this book, which will probably soon be called for, will become indispensable to travellers in the East. We cannot help expressing a wish that the book contained some illustrations, like the exquisite view of the country round Nazareth which is to be found in the Archbishop of York's edition of the New Testament, from a sketch by Dr. Malan, or the now, we fear, forgotten views of the Holy Land buried in the edition of "Josephus," commenced by Dr. Traill and completed by Isaac Taylor. These illustrations were called by Dr. G. Williams, author of "The Holy City," "Photographs of the East."

G. D. BOYLE.



ART. V.—THE LORD'S FORECASTS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.—MATT. XIII.

THE Parables of the Kingdom are to us interpretations of things as they have been and as they are; but when spoken, they were forecasts of things as they were to be. We are so used to them as instruction, that we scarcely think of them as prophecy; yet in this character they form a distinct and important feature in our Lord's ministry. The King of the Kingdom is also the Prophet of it; and that in the way of prediction, as well as in the larger sense of prophecy. In these parables He gives His forecasts of the historic character of His Kingdom—its historic as distinguished from its ideal character.

He tells what will actually happen in the outward world of fact, and so provides against occasions of discouragement and offence.

The group of seven parables in Matt. xiii. form, in some respects, a complete scheme of prophecy for this purpose, whether they were all spoken at the same time or not. If we believe them to be here collected for that very reason, it will be in harmony with the subjective principle of arrangement, which appears to have largely shaped the formation of the first Gospel. There it would seem that the teaching work of Christ is more perfectly presented by intentional collocation, and in an order suggested by internal relations, yet certainly corresponding on the whole with the actual course of communication; which indeed must naturally have been itself determined by a like progress of thought.

The subject of the teaching is the Kingdom of Heaven. Its primary principles and doctrines, its character and spirit, have been taught at large in the Sermon on the Mount; and these were being illustrated by words and deeds. But what will it be in itself? Long promised and expected, it is now at hand. That announcement has gone forth, yet men look about for it in vain. Its coming is felt rather than seen. It may be rising like a faint cloud from the horizon, but shows no shape or outline; yet it will "immediately appear." What will that appearance prove to be? Majesty and might and victory are inherent in its name. How will it be glorified in the people Israel? How tell on the Gentiles and the world? What will be its splendours and triumphs? How will it advance, and how prevail? Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, the common people, godly men, waiting for the Kingdom, disciples of John and of Jesus touched with the new ideas, would have their several dreams of what was coming; vague and shifting dreams, but coloured by their desires or their fears; their tendencies of mind or their fixed ideas. But none of them could predict the form of appearance or the course of history. There was but One Whose insight and Whose foresight beheld the present and the future; and it was a very different scene which lay before His eye from what anyone else would have depicted or conceived. None could see as clearly as He did the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven in its spiritual nature and its eternal issues. Yet He saw with equal clearness what would be the mingled and dubious aspect of its earthly course. It will deposit its life in the common soil of humanity, and work its way in conformity with the constitution of man and the conditions of the present scene. It will not force the freedom of the human will; nor annihilate other influences in the midst of which it appears; nor violate the

natural development of opinion or of society; nor compel the recognition of its claims; nor change the nature of everything which it gathers as it sweeps along through the world. Of these and the like conditions the Kingdom of Heaven will be patient: and will accept the mingled and doubtful, the disappointing and perplexing results, which must, on these terms, accompany its real successes and precede its final vindication.

This is the gist of the seven parables, which, in simple phrase and by natural imagery, prophesy what the Kingdom of Heaven will be like. The facts have corresponded and still correspond to their predictions; and so, while they have served their purposes of instruction through the ages, they have converted seeming objections to Christianity into real supports, as being proofs of divine plan and foresight, like other evidences from prophecy.

Only from this point of view would I now consider the several parables. As being among the most familiar parts of Scripture, the most frequent subjects of exposition, and the texts of innumerable sermons, they will require words of comment only on their predictive value and use.

The parables are distinctly divided into a series of four, and one of three—the first set connected by the words, “another parable;” the second by the words, “again, the kingdom of heaven is like.” The first is addressed to the people, ending with the words, “All these things spake Jesus in parables to the multitudes.” The second series is addressed to the disciples, and is opened by the words, “Then He left the multitudes, and went into the house.”

Bengel, in marking this division, has connected it with his suggestion that the prophetic character of the seven parables, besides their application to the common and perpetual conditions of the Kingdom of Heaven, have also an intended correspondence with successive periods or ages of the Church; not, indeed, as broadly separated, but as passing or melting into each other. His scheme is as follows:

FIRST SERIES.

1. Ver. 16. Time of Christ and Apostles.
2. „ 25. Post-Apostolic times—growth of corruptions.
3. „ 32. Constantine—propagation of Church under “Princes.”
4. „ 33. Diffusion through the human race.

SECOND SERIES.

5. „ 44. Kingdom of the Beast, and Reformation.
6. „ 46. Under seventh trumpet—kingdom at its highest recognition.
7. „ 47. The last confusion and final severance.

It is a curious scheme. Certainly I do not adopt it: but

there are more correspondences between the parables and the periods than are seen at first. Bengel modifies it himself, by doubting whether the second series should be applied as above, and read as posterior to the first, or as ranging alongside of it and indicating experiences common to all Church history, though prominent at certain periods. Thus the three last parables would be disengaged from the commentator's Apocalyptic exposition, and would simply express the truths which they are generally considered to represent in the permanent course of the Gospel.

There is a natural temptation, and in some minds it is very strong, to apportion forecasting words of Scripture to distinct periods, or even to particular nations, persons, or events. In such and such parts or facts of history, it is thought such and such prophetic intimations were fulfilled. And so they were, if the word "fulfilled" be understood according to its frequent significance in Scripture as including repeated and various fulfilments. In general, and excepting the central and perfect fulfilments in the person of Christ, all fulfilments are partial in themselves, and complementary to others; not directly but obliquely aimed at, not separately but inclusively intended. This is the case in a measure with positive predictions, and still more with that kind of latent prophecy of which the seven parables are an example.

Times when common phenomena become prominent, occasions when principles receive unusual illustration, do not exhaust the meaning of prophecies, which contemplate the principles as always working, and the phenomena as often repeated. Thus, to take the instances before us, Bengel's applications of the parables of the Tares and of that of the Discovered Treasure to the post-Apostolic and the Reformation periods are true in the sense now described, though it would be absurd to treat them as intentionally limited to those periods. Scripture, as written for ever, is always foreshowing the future, as well as interpreting the present and the past. This is the necessary result of its entire harmony with the reality and truth of things, its thorough insight into human nature in all its workings, but especially as human nature shows itself in relation to the Word of God. Through all its pages we feel that there is an onward-looking eye, and a clear anticipation of the various effects of the natural and spiritual forces which are in contact with each other. There is all this in these parables; but there is more than this; for here the Lord is speaking in person—the Sower of the results of His sowing, the King of the course of His kingdom, which will all be under His own oversight and governance, and which at that initial moment is all before His eye.

I will now briefly note the chief lines on which these forecasts of the Kingdom indicate its future history, according to that character of prophecy which has been described above.

The first series of four parables is a history of life and growth. It consists of two pairs; the first pair gives that history in the internal sphere of personal faith and character; the second in the region of visible development and external influence. So they shall be now distinguished.

FIRST SERIES.

The first pair of parables—"The Sower" and "The Tares." These are united by the same imagery, used with the same significance. The sowing of seed in the earth with the natural effects that follow, aptly represent the casting of principles of thought into the mind of man, and the moral growths which they engender.

The Sower.

It is the fundamental parable, antecedent to all further information. In giving under this similitude the origination of the Kingdom, this parable expresses also its essential nature, and foreshows its continuous history. "There came forth the sower to sow." That puts us at once at the right point of view. Had it been "There went forth the king to conquer," the foundations of the kingdom would have been shown in power and compulsion, and its character and story might have resembled those of Islam. Had it been "There came forth the builder to build," this had presented the structure and organization of the Church as the primary idea, antecedent to all that should be done within it, and might have given a cast and tone to Christianity to which Rome has too nearly approached. As it is, all originates in the Word, addressed to the mind of man, scattered in the fields of thought, working there beneath the surface, amid natural conditions under which its inherent life may flourish or may perish. The Kingdom must begin in the understanding, the conscience and the heart of man, receiving and assimilating the Word of God. It must have its root in free personal conviction. Its first form is faith.

This parable was not in the first place prophecy. The Sower was come, and even then at work; but that was the commencement of a continuous system, and this same sowing was to be carried on through all the ages. Thus in its onward forecast the parable preserves the fundamental idea of the Kingdom of Heaven, so long as it shall exist upon the earth.

But, in regard to the results of the sowing, the parable is distinctly prophetic. It is the language of One Who knows the future of His work, knows it as it will always be, because He

“knows what is in man.” In the soil of humanity there is by God's will a self-originating power; also various states exist and various influences tell. The parable foresees and admits them. Whatever aid additional to the Word itself may be employed, it is not mentioned here; anyhow its working will be secret, and there will be no forced inevitable result. Consequently the wide field of humanity will be covered in varying proportions with failure and success. Not only the fact of failure, but the different degrees of it, and the separate causes for those different degrees, are included in the forecast, as are also the different measures of successful result (some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold, and some an hundred). It belongs to exposition and to preaching to enlarge on these particulars. For the present purpose it is sufficient to observe that our Lord has left us under no illusions, and that His foreseeing eye beheld what has actually occurred. The proportion, not of apparent, but of essential success, has varied in times and places; but on the whole it may prove to accord with the intimation here. Certainly the experience of sowers of the Word from the Apostles to ourselves have largely corresponded to these anticipations. We still read the fulfilment of our Master's words in the very anxieties, dissatisfactions, and disappointments of our ministry, as well as in those happy hours in which we watch the healthful blade, the forming ear, the ripening grain, and gather fruit unto life eternal.

The Tares.

The prophecy continues. There will be a darker fact in the history than ineffectual sowing, promise withered, and fruit not brought to perfection. An enemy appears. He has, indeed, appeared already, but only on the non-receptive ground, as taking away the Word out of the heart. He will do more. He will become a sower himself, mingling his work with that which he could not prevent. The sower goes forth in open day in the field which is his own. The enemy comes stealthily, “while men sleep,” and does his work of mischief where the wheat is springing. Principles of falsehood, opinions which develop into corruption, doctrines which simulate but pervert the truth, will be generated in the minds of men by something more than natural causes, and in course of time these will be so realized in characters and actions, that “children of the wicked one” will be commingled and confused with children of the Kingdom. Furthermore, it will appear that this commingling and confusion are such that no real effectual severance can safely be made, that rash efforts for this purpose would be made at the risk of serious danger or damage to yet uncertain characters, and the only result must be that both will grow

together unto the harvest. We cannot read the later Epistles without seeing how soon the predictions of this parable began to be accomplished. The sad reflections, the plain warnings, the strong denunciations of Paul, of Peter, of John, of Jude, in regard to things that are going on in the Churches before their eyes, are proof how quickly the fulfilment of the second parable was associated with the fulfilment of the first, and the association has been shown to be permanent by the successive heresies and corruptions of later times.

The prophecy of so grievous and enduring an admixture demanded another prophecy beyond it: namely, that of a final and effectual severance by the work of the Angels of God; and this is given in strong, explicit terms, of tares bound up for the burning and wheat secured in the garner, lighted up at the end with that sudden flash of promise, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father." The past and present fulfilment in history of the former part of the parable is a perpetual pledge of the fulfilment of its last prediction.

The second pair of parables—"The Mustard Seed," and "The Hidden Leaven."

These parables follow fitly on the others, since the life of the Kingdom on the whole is a consequence of its life in individual souls. They are also fitly joined together, as predicting the development of that internal life in its two forms of visible organism and penetrating influence.

The Mustard Seed.

This foretells that the Kingdom, which is fundamentally an inward power, shall take shape as visible organism, and rise as an institution in the world. It foretells by implication that this development will be the proper evolution of its life, as natural and necessary an evolution as that by which the seed becomes the plant. By the proverbial comparison of "the least of all seeds" with its after-growth, it foretells that the small and insignificant company at that time existing should rise and spread into a Catholic Church. "When it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof." It will scarcely be pressing the interpretation (for the words must have had their meaning) if we read in them the prophecy of what in fact has taken place. "When it was grown," the Church became greater than the voluntary societies and schools of thought, to the category of which it appeared to belong. It became an institution, increasing in substance and expansion, with consequent relations to all surrounding life, so as to offer resting-places and starting-points to the ever-moving interests

and winged activities which come and go around it, and to take its place in the scenery of the world.

The Leaven.

There is another kind of development beside that of an organized institution. As that was foretold by the similitude of an inconsiderable plant, so this by the effect of the simplest household act. "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened."

Some, from the more common use of leaven as representing corruption, have read it as a prophecy of evil influences working in the Church; and in that sense it would match the second parable of the former pair. But this is negatived by the wording; "the Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven." In the former, the Kingdom of Heaven was not like the enemy, but like the man who sowed good seed, and to whose work that misfortune befell. Also, "till it was all leavened" (with corruption) would be a shocking conclusion of the prophecy, and impossible to admit. The woman does not hide the leaven to spoil the meal, but to make good household bread; and the purpose and effect vindicate the ordinary exposition. The Kingdom of Heaven, besides being a visible Church, would also be a secret influence working silently on the world, affecting the surrounding masses, telling on public opinion, changing the character of nations, infusing its spirit into laws and institutions. If that is the prophecy, it is certainly fulfilled, and being fulfilled now. The leavening influence is working in a thousand ways in the world. The Christian standard of character, the Christian principles of thought, the Christian tone of feeling, are ever telling in improvements which often do not acknowledge their real origin, and even in quarters where Christian faith is disowned. There is no more certain or patent fact in history than this leavening influence of Christianity in the world. It is our part to promote it at home and to extend it abroad. A time of such wide and rapid communication of influences and ideas as that in which we live, ought to bring its own special contribution to the fulfilment of this prophecy.

SECOND SERIES.

The three remaining parables are, as has been observed, separated from the first four by a marked difference of expression, and by the mention of a change of place and audience. They are spoken in the house to the disciples, and so form a kind of appendix to the historic group, conveying intimations needed by those who heard them, and also needed for ever.

They are obviously divided into the two which form a pair and the one parable which concludes the entire course.

The Hid Treasure, and the Pearl of Great Price.

Both parables describe a discovery and the conduct that ensues, and by the different aspects under which these are presented the account is made complete. I am now concerned with them only as forecasts. Such they are (if taken in their commonly admitted sense) as foreshowing those concealments and discoveries, those seekings and findings, which would always characterize the history of the Gospel. Yet these could have been anticipated only by One Who knew the mind of man in its relation to spiritual truth. Salvation, eternal life, exceeding great and precious promises, unsearchable riches of Christ, were to be freely given and openly revealed to men. Where, then, was concealment? How could they be like treasures hid in a field? What room would there be for surprise of discovery and for joyful sacrifices for appropriation? The Lord, Who was bringing these things into His Church, saw that while they would be accepted, recognised, and celebrated in creeds, liturgies, and sacraments, their real value would still be hidden from men in general, who personally would be no more enriched by them than one would be by a treasure which he had never seen, hidden in a field which was not his own. This general revelation which may be still concealment, and this personal revelation which is true discovery, were strange ideas even to the Apostles. "Lord," they said, "what has happened that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us and not unto the world?" But the parable, while it implies the crowd from whom the treasure is hid, dwells upon the case in which it is found, telling in sympathetic tone of the wonder and the joy and the scarce-felt sacrifices which precede the full possession.

There is foresight also of other cases in which the discovery and possession are reached after searchings and tests, and with enlightened judgment. Thoughtful and exercised minds, purposely seeking for the good and the fair, and securing with appreciative choice such moral gains as they can find, are brought by Divine teaching to see in Christ the true object of their search. What things were gain before, they are ready to count as loss for Christ, from an intelligent estimate of His worth and a clear perception of His glory.

Thus the Lord Jesus stands at the beginning of His Gospel, and looks down through the ages at the spiritual histories of men, and from that day to this the words which describe a great crisis of those histories have been, and are being, fulfilled. Doubtless there are times when such fulfilments are more

than usually abundant and distinct. Bengel, then, had some reason for connecting these parables with the Reformation period, and its discoveries of treasures of Truth's grace, for, in fact, the parables are illustrated afresh by all seasons of spiritual awakening, renewed inquiry, and fresh light on the Word of God.

The Draw-net.

This parable is the fitting close to the entire course, as addressed to those who were now to be "fishers of men," and it is prophetic of the whole work which they were called to begin. It foretells the wide stretch of the Gospel net, its long sweep through multitudinous waters, the mingled contents it would collect, its steady approach to the eternal shore, and the final separation which must there be made. Then "the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth." An ideal expectation would not have depicted a Kingdom of Heaven "gathering of every kind." Some even now contest the truth of the description. "That cannot be the Gospel Church which collects all sorts of people. That cannot have the name and prerogatives of a Kingdom of Heaven which encloses (*τὰ σατρά*) so much rotten material." But the foresight is justified by the fact, and the fact has proved inevitable. Even in the first select Christianity of the Apostles' days, the presence of this admixture is obvious, as a cause of bitterness to their souls. All the care that can be used in our missions to secure a pure nucleus for the Church is unsatisfactory in its effects; and when a contagion of opinion spreads, and motives become complicated, and multitudes flow in, and nations are discipled, and the faith is transmitted, this result is beyond all prevention. It is impossible to stay at every moment the progress of the net, and to sort its contents beneath the waters. Things have happened, and must happen, as this parable foreshows.

We must say the same of this whole course of parables. From a boat on the lake of Gennesareth, from a chamber in a house in Capernaum, a large and definite account is given of the future character and history of the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. With that account the facts have corresponded and are corresponding still. It included a large proportion of failure in various degrees, and a partial and graduated success, the crafty intrusion of a hostile power with damaging confusing consequences, developments from insignificant beginnings, limitations of discovery and attainment, and large

collection of the worthless and unsound. Yet it is the Kingdom of Heaven, in which the real results are secured, and from which all anomalies will disappear. Great powers are present in it, the Son of Man, the enemy which is the devil, and the angels who are employed at its close. No teacher or dreamer on the Kingdom of Heaven could have anticipated for it such a history at the time when Jesus of Nazareth spake these parables. Now they seem mere accounts of what has happened, shaped for admonition and instruction. But they form a sustained prophecy of which a long fulfilment in the present scene ensures its last fulfilment at the end.

T. D. BERNARD.

Reviews.

Romanism and the Reformation from the Standpoint of Prophecy. By H. GRATTAN GUINNESS, F.R.G.S. Hodder and Stoughton, 1887.

MR. GRATTAN GUINNESS is too well known to need a special preface to state his title to a hearing as a writer on prophecy. In his first work, on the "Approaching End of the Age," he proved himself master of many important aspects of the question, of a wide and in some ways an uncommon knowledge, as well as of a style vigorous and clear enough to do full justice to the views which he desired to enforce. But in the work which is now before us we cannot say that we think he has been equally successful. The main subject of which it treats has been discussed again and again within and without the limits of the English Church, till there is so far nothing further left to say. The story therefore, which Mr. Guinness tells, is for the most part so well known that it deprives these lectures of any charm of novelty. Their style, moreover, though suited possibly to the taste of those who heard them, is not such as is likely to win calm and serious searchers after truth in the quiet of the study. Throughout they are too wordy, and often break out into strange and abrupt bursts of an eloquence which is by no means of the highest order. Hence the tendency of the book is often to inflame the fancy rather than to inform the reason, and frequently there seems a want of that gentle spirituality of tone which is needed to temper the foaming rhetoric of its ardent author. However useful, therefore, in some ways it may be found to be, in others we think it may prove harmful; and in any case, it can hardly be regarded as an impartial search into the depths of an important subject.

Of course, however, we are quite at one with Mr. Guinness in the judgment which he passes on the Church of Rome, as well as in the force and number of the charges which he brings against her. No one who is trained in simple Scripture and the principles of the Reformation can question for a moment the dreadful reality of those doctrinal errors which have marked with a portentous guiltiness the annals of her long career. No one, again, who is versed in history can fail to view with