

confess to being one of those who think improvement has been made most improbable for many, many years by the misguided action of our would-be temperance friends, and by the way in which leading politicians have eaten their own words in the hope that by so doing they will score a point. We must be just to the publicans if we would advance the cause of temperance. As a class, I believe publicans are no better and no worse than others. Many are keenly anxious that their houses should be thoroughly respectable; the owners of the smaller houses should be treated with fairness, but their houses should be closed.

The clergyman of the parish, while not neglecting his directly spiritual work, should take the lead in any movement having for its object the material and social improvement of his people; he should further the cause of education, help to establish working-men's clubs and youths' institutes, be the friend of the poor as well as of the rich, and I firmly believe that, as the years roll round, the number of those who wish "to do away with him" will rapidly diminish.

A COUNTRY PARSON.

Notes on Bible Words.

No. I.—"PREVENT."

IN his "Farewell," deeply spiritual and suggestive, Adolphe Monod said: "The Word of God ought to be studied in two ways: First, it should be read *as a whole* . . . ; secondly, in detail, to be able to enter into and understand every verse and every word." Here and there, of course, occurs a "word" which it aids us much to "understand."

It is hoped that a series of Notes in *THE CHURCHMAN*, usually brief, on the more interesting or important "words" of the Bible, A.V., may be found helpful to some readers, both students and teachers.

In our own day "prevent" means to intercept and *hinder*. That is not the meaning in the Bible (King James I.) or in the Prayer Book. There the word is either to be earlier than, or to be in front of, so as to *help*.

1 Thess. iv. 15: "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep;" R.V.

precede. "Nous ne préviendrons point ceux qui seront morts" (or, "précèderons").

Ps. cxix. 147, 148: "I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried . . .;" *i.e.*, before it dawned he began to pray. "Mine eyes prevented the night watches."

In St. Matt. xvii. 25: for "Jesus *prevented* him, saying . . .;" R.V. has, "Jesus spake first to him, saying . . .;" *i.e.*, before Peter asked . . . "*prævenit* eum Jesus dicens." Compare to be beforehand, anticipate, forestall.¹

Ps. xxi. 3: "Thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness." *Comest to meet him* (Hupfeld). "Thou dost meet him bringing blessings of good" (Delitzsch).²

Ps. lix. 10: "The God of my mercy shall prevent me." "Will anticipate me with His mercy, *i.e.*, will meet me, bringing His mercy without any effort of mine" (Delitzsch).³

Dean Perowne says: "God's mercy must anticipate, come to meet, man's necessity."

Compare the Collects: "Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings . . . and further us;" "Lord, we pray Thee that Thy grace may always prevent and follow us." Grace preventing (coming before) and following up.

Apply the thought *prevenient* to repentance. The father went to meet the prodigal son. The Lord turned and looked upon Peter. "'God met me and unhorsed me.' 'God prevented me with His grace and mercy.' Thus Paul" (Bridge).

Apply to times of trouble. Ps. lxxix. 8: "Let Thy tender mercies speedily prevent us." It is a very natural prayer "O Lord, make haste to help us;" come to succour us, "and that soon." But succour, of the best sort, is ever, so to say, waiting near us.

God is *waiting* to be gracious. His grace is always before, in front of, us: as a mother in a sick-room offers this or that before the child asks—as a generous friend lets you know his gift is really waiting for your asking—as a guide turns round to aid at a moment of need.

Herein is our comfort: God is "always more ready to hear than we to pray."

¹ "You have prevented me only a few days" (Hume). "So to prevent the time of life" (Shakspeare, "Julius Cæsar," v. i). "Sir George prevents every wish" (Inchbald).

² Isa. xxi. 14: "They prevented with their bread him that fled." "With their own bread did welcome the fugitives" (Kay). "Did meet the fugitives with their bread" (R.V.).

³ "It will be a happy thing for thee if . . . thou canst see both Providence and grace preceding thee, forestalling thy needs and preparing thy path. Mercy, in the case of many of us, ran before our desires and prayers" (Spurgeon).