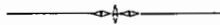


speakers: "I hear, John," said an old relative to the rising orator, "I hear that thou hast a gift of speaking—let me advise thee to be always ready with thy conclusion, for thou never knowest how soon thou mayest want it."

Here, then, is ours. The whole earth is the monument of her eminent sons, and carries their epitaph upon her breast. In these days names are soon forgotten, and reputations fade, but the Church and Diocese of Peterborough will be ungrateful indeed if she soon forget the memory of one who, coming from the sister island, adorned her with its peculiar graces, and raised into eminence a somewhat obscure diocese, once well-nigh buried in the Fens.



ART. IV.—SAYINGS OF JESUS.

SPIRITUAL DEFILEMENT.

THERE are sayings of Jesus which sweep the whole field of sacred worship and reach down to the roots of eternal life. Few are more notable than the sentence, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man." It is impossible for us to realize the feelings with which it must have been heard by the religious Jews. They were either offended, like the Pharisees, who bated Jesus, or perplexed, like Peter, who loved Him. When we recollect the importance that was attached to the distinctions between clean and unclean meats by the Hebrews, and remember that these were no late inventions, but repeatedly enjoined in their Scriptures, it is startling to find Jesus say with emphatic precision: "Hear and understand, not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man;" or, as it is put by St. Mark, "There is nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile him." In these words He challenged the entire fabric of those religious observances with which His disciples were most familiar; and they were gravely disturbed. Nor did they soon recover themselves, and see what their Master really meant. Long afterwards, even the most courageous of His followers, Peter, said of himself (with gratulation), "Nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth." The sentence of Jesus, like some other of His sayings, was hid from those who heard it, "neither understood they the things which were spoken."

And there are some who do not apprehend it now. Not only does the whole Hebrew race still preserve a distinction between clean and unclean animals, and, on religious grounds, believe that certain food is forbidden to the faithful, but we

cannot hear these words of Christ without feeling that they bear upon the Christian also. Christendom is not wholly freed from the old Hebrew sentiment about the religious significance of the food we eat. In the Roman Church, for example, certain meats are virtually unclean on fixed days, and their use at such times entails the necessity of dispensation or penance and absolution. Among ourselves, moreover, though we must not saddle our Church with responsibility for minute regulations about abstinence, it does appoint fasts, and thus recognises some ecclesiastical restraint about that which goeth into the mouth; and there are those who periodically abstain from flesh food on conscientious grounds. Again, though they have no official authority for their scruples, and though Christ gave the first communion to men who had just eaten a meal, those who do not communicate except fasting, who on no day touch any food at all before they partake of the Lord's table, virtually assume that that which entereth in by the mouth can disqualify, or in some measure "defile," them in their most sacred acts of worship.

What, then, shall we make of the emphatic sentence of Christ about defilement? If it was anything it was vital. It aggrieved His fellow-countrymen, perplexed His friends, and offended His enemies, the Pharisees. And the report of their reception of His saying drew from Him one of the severest sentences He is recorded to have uttered. "Let them alone." They were incapable of seeing what He would really teach. They were blind leaders of the blind. Both should fall into the ditch.

This is terribly severe. And it is not merely severe: it is disturbing, and thus full of danger. Anything which loosens a man's hold on what he has held, or confuses his view of that which he has learnt, is full of risk. I do not mean to imply that on this account it should be avoided. Spiritual danger meets everyone who comes within the influence of Christ. Christ is, in one sense, the bringer of a sword which cuts knots which had seemed to be firmly tied. The stroke of His saying about uncleanness is one such blow. It staggered those who heard it. And it may have much effect now.

Some, for example, are tempted to see, or seek in it a deliverance from unwelcome subjection. They have not seen beneath the guidance of regulations. Their religion has been a system of good rules. These have been their chief restraint from the indulgence of thought and action. But to them Jesus seems to put this restraint in a new light. He says: "There is nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile him." They are keen enough to see that this saying affects the whole use of religious observances. Then the

froward shallow spirit leaps to a conclusion which opens the door of license. "Here," it thinks, "is emancipation from the tiresome antique prohibitions of old-fashioned propriety." Pious customs lose their force. The rites and ordinances of religion are undervalued or despised. The man thus affected fancies that he has discovered agreeable liberty provided by Christ Himself. That has been the case with many. The misfortune is that they read only half of what Christ says about uncleanness. There is really no escape from the danger of defilement. Only the source is changed. "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." Our sight is shifted from an outward visible spring of mischief to an inward one—the heart itself. And thus those who are looking out for greater liberty get nothing by the change. Nay, they lose. It is comparatively easy to obey when we are told precisely what to do. But when we are to be preserved from danger, not by a punctilious keeping of rules, but by continually using great principles of life which they involve, we have fresh responsibility laid upon us. He who relies on the devout observance of external ordinances can observe them scrupulously, and then feel that he has done his duty. He says: "All these things I have kept from my youth up, what lack I yet?" What, indeed, has he to learn? He has to learn the spirit of self-sacrifice in whatever shape it may be most needful for him. The inner law, the Divine demand, takes one form with this man, another with that. But it always touches him in the most sensitive spot of his conscience. He is never free from its pressure.

For this new obligation is never relaxed, never dormant. The man knows no parenthesis in his obedience. There are no gaps, no pauses, in its operation. The heart, out of which comes the danger of defilement, is never still. It beats with the continuous pulse of warning, rebuke, and prohibition. The old atmosphere of precise instruction, and periodical compliance, which to some seem so galling, is really by far the easiest to breathe. Those who discard it carelessly, without asking what it means and what it leaves to be observed, throw away the one protection which they had against defilement, and are likely enough to fall into errors which they find eventually disastrous.

When, therefore, we read the first half of Christ's sentence, let us go on to the second, with a feeling that it draws us closer to our Guide. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. That marks the interpretation which Christ gave to ordinances, and which is touched in the sentence about formal defilement. This is the aim of which

He speaks in another place, saying, "Except your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." And the excess is seen, not in doing more things of the same sort which they did, but in shifting the test of righteousness from the mouth to the heart.

The sentence of Christ, moreover, has a double effect. It is unfairly used, as we have seen, by some who seek for license, but as it perplexed His disciples who loved Him eighteen centuries ago, so it may now. There are devout persons who cannot dismiss a feeling of unsettlement when they come across such sayings as those we are considering, and see how wide an interpretation they admit or demand. These good people have a profound regard for the religious ordinances which they observe; and they resent anything which seems to throw a slight upon them, or to detract from their value. What shall they do? How shall they reconcile their reverential customs with the interpretation which was given to worship by their Lord?

I would ask them to remember that Christ did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it, and to show how it must be fulfilled by His followers. He would not blot out the letter, but would have them read between its lines. Because He would have them see what was within, He does not forbid a seeing of that which is without. A descent below the surface does not condemn that which is outside. We must not degrade the word "superficial." The skin is peculiarly sensitive and essential to life; though it be not the body. There is a covering to the richest possessions; and more, there are channels for conveying them. Words, for example, in themselves are merely verbal, but without them we could not give expression to what we feel. The ordinances which the Jews kept were not in themselves reckoned to be as wrong. Far from it. They had been divinely appointed. But those whom Christ rebuked had made the word of God of none effect by their traditions. This is most notable. It does not follow that because a custom is of Divine origin that therefore it should always remain in force. Sometimes it may be superseded, but a more excellent way does not show that the former ways were bad. The food of riper years may not cast blame upon that of infancy. The risen sun does not put shame upon the candle. Meat does not condemn milk.

And, again, we can understand and appreciate the withdrawal of an ordinance when it has been misapprehended or misused. Certain customs and prohibitions had been divinely ordained among the Hebrews. They had their purpose in being symbolical or distinctive. They separated the Hebrews

from idolatrous neighbours, or they set forth deep truths. But the people made them of none effect by their traditions. They missed the real meaning of what they were ordained to observe. And when the fulness of the time was come, and the Church of Christ rose out of Judaism, these ordinances were set aside—they were left behind.

But others came in their place. Such as we call outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace. And it is to the use of these that our Lord's words now apply. We, in our turn, as Christians, have to take heed lest we mistake the ordinances of Christ, seeking to invest them with an efficacy which they do not possess, however divinely ordained. "There is nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile," or, by parity of reasoning, "sanctify" him. The Hebrews of old misused Divine ordinances by giving them a material interpretation instead of a spiritual. Thus they came under the judgment of Christ. And now it is possible to spoil or frustrate the purpose of God in providing outward means of grace by using them amiss. Take prayer, for instance. The privilege of laying our wants before God is incalculably valuable, and we are taught to believe that He is more ready to hear than we to pray, but there are still those who think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

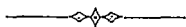
Warnings about the efficacy of that which entereth by the mouth, are, however, most closely applicable to our use of the Supper of the Lord. We are tempted to let our reverential and spiritual participation of this become materialistic. Christians are all invited to communicate, to their great and endless comfort; and yet they may fall into the same error that the Jews did, with respect to what they had been unquestionably bidden to observe.

Here we are in the face of a large matter; and yet we are driven to it by the saying of Christ. This, indeed, covers the whole field of Christian worship. We cannot tell what is in the heart of the individual worshipper, nor how he secretly uses the Christian customs, or ordinances of religion, such as prayer, private or public, the reading of the Bible, and the sacraments of the Church. It is not for us to pronounce judgment on any individual. He may gratify us by an intelligent acquiescence in our views, and all the while be spiritually untouched. His devotional habits and rules may seem perfunctory and superficial, and yet he may be in essentially genuine accord with the most liberally-minded worshipper.

To his own master he standeth or falleth. But I would steadily point to the profoundly significant words of Christ which we have been considering, in the hope that Christians will still more bravely read, mark, learn and inwardly digest

them. It may, with some, require courage to do so, and yet they stand as the key to all true worship, and the interpretation of it, by Him who said, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing."

HARRY JONES.



ART. V.—THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PETER, AND
THE REVELATION OF PETER.¹

IN November, 1892, M. U. Bouriant, Director of the French Archæological Institute at Cairo, published the ninth volume of the "Memoirs of the Institute." The larger part of the volume is taken up with an account of the text of, and a discussion of the problems raised by, a papyrus containing a treatise on Greek arithmetic. The latter part gives the contents of a vellum MS. of thirty-three leaves, containing portions of no less than three lost Christian works, viz.: The Book of Enoch, the Gospel of Peter, and the Apocalypse of Peter. The characters and spelling in the MS. are not earlier than the eighth century, nor later than the twelfth. The first page contains the figure of a Coptic cross, each of the arms of which has a smaller cross; on the right and left is a Greek Alpha and Omega. "At the end of the volume," writes Dr. Bratke, who has given us a more detailed account than any English writer so far (January 27th), "is a piece of parchment attached to the inner side of the leather binding, containing, in uncial characters, a section from a Canonical Gospel." He does not say which. "Finally there is a leaf, also in uncials, clearly forming a fragment from the Acts of the Martyr Julian." The text of the Greek of Enoch still waits for minute treatment and comparison with the existing fragments and the Ethiopic version already well known in the edition of Archbishop Laurence.

¹ "The Gospel according to Peter, and the Revelation of Peter: Two Lectures on the Newly-Recovered Fragments, together with the Greek Text." By J. Armitage Robinson, B.D., and Montagu Rhodes James, M.A.; London: C. J. Clay and Sons.—"A Popular Account of the Newly-Recovered Gospel of St. Peter." By J. Rendel Harris. London: Hodder and Stoughton.—"The Apocryphal Gospel of Peter: The Greek Text of the Newly-Discovered Fragments." Edited by H. B. S[wete]. London: Macmillan.—"Bruchstücke des Evangeliums und der Apokalypse des Petrus." Von Adolf Harnack. Leipzig: J. G. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.—See also: *Theol. Liter. Blatt.*, December 2nd and 9th, 1892. Article by Dr. Ed. Bratke, of Bonn.—Rev. J. O. F. Murray on "Evangelium Secundum Petrum" in *Expositor*, January, 1893. An interesting account of the Gospel of Peter will be found, as far as then known, in Baring Gould's "Lost and Hostile Gospels."