

God, but "in it"; and He commits them solemnly to the Father's keeping power, to be "kept in His Name," surrounded, filled, with that great word, "ABBA." He would have them not only pure and safe, but happy. He "speaks in the world," in these wonderful words of intercession, audible once for all to mortal ears, that they may have "His joy" (ver. 13), His experience of bliss in the obedience of love, "fulfilled in them," in their spirits, as they respond to His. Like Him, they have tasted, and will taste, "the world's hatred," in one form or another; the antagonism which the life true to God must in measure awake in the environment which does not love Him. Yet they are to live, for its own good, in that world, only "kept" from the snares and clutches of "the evil one," its god; so kept, in the life-giving "knowledge," that they are "sanctified in truth," hallowed, consecrated, through and through, to their Lord.

One closing note let us make as we listen: "I am glorified in them" (ver. 10). "O generous love!" These very disciples, with a candour about themselves learnt in their heaven-given "knowledge," never tire, in their Gospel story, of disclosing their own imperfectness. But such is the Lord they "know," so does He know Himself in them, that He does not pity them only, nor even love them only. He is glorified in them. They are His exultation. "On His breast their love He proudly weareth."

H. DUNELM.

*(To be continued.)*

## STUDIES IN TEXTS.

Suggestions for Sermons from Current Literature.

BY THE REV. HARRINGTON C. LEES, M.A.

### X. GOD THE INVITER.

*Text.*—"He invited you."—2 Thess. ii. 14.

[Book of the Month: Plummer's Commentary on 2 Thessalonians<sup>1</sup>  
= P2. Other refs., Milligan's Comm. = Mg. Moffatt's Comm.  
in *Expos. Gr. Test.* = Mt. Moffatt's Translation of N.T. = M.  
Plummer's Comment. on 1 Thess. = P1.]

"God is the great Inviter" (P2. 77); so on 1 Thess. ii. 12, "Walk worthily of the God Who is the Inviter." With "the Inviter"

<sup>1</sup> Published by Robert Scott, 6s. Sterling work, as always with Dr. Plummer.

compare "the Deliverer" in i. 10. The verb here is often used of invitations: Mt. xxii. 3, 9; Lk. vii. 39; xiv. 7-9 (P1. 27).

I. THE INVITATION (2 Thess. ii. 14).—It has already been given. "Here we have the aorist (*ἐκάλεσεν*) in harmony with 'chose' (*ἐίλατο*) in v. 13. The choice was made from all eternity; the invitation to realize it was given when the missionaries began to preach at Thessalonica" (P2. 77). There is nothing "forbidding" about God's aspect. It is "winning." He is eternally "The Inviter." Christ was always dwelling on this. There is in the thought an "Affinity with the 'invitation' in the Parable of the Supper: Mt. xxii. 1 ff., Lk. xiv. 16 ff." (Mg. 27).

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE INVITATION (2 Thess. ii. 14).—A genuine enjoyment and enrichment: "*with a view to the securing*: we have the same phrase, *εἰς περιπόησιν*, in 1 Thess. v. 9 and Heb. x. 39, and the meaning is the same in all three places" (P2. 77). "Not merely heard it with their ears, but embraced it and appropriated it in their hearts" (P1. 29). It carries with it a responsibility now. "God is The Inviter, to Whom they owe their admission into the Kingdom, and they must habitually live in a manner which befits such a privilege. It does not mean that He is now inviting them into a Kingdom which they have not yet entered. Throughout the New Testament the Kingdom of God is both a privilege possessed and a prize to be won" (P1. 27). They have already something and they are always being pressed to take more. "Throughout the New Testament the Kingdom is spoken of sometimes as present, but more often as future." "In the main the two views correspond to the two Advents of Christ." "What is specially meant is the existing spiritual Kingdom which the Thessalonians had already entered" (P1. 27). This means definite acquisition and progress. "He called you by our gospel, to gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (M. 259). "This term *Kingdom* is commonly used of the beginning of the Christian life, of being admitted into Christ's fold and called to be saints. But something future seems to be included, if not to prevail." "The domain in which God rules is partially realized in this world; and it will have its full development hereafter." It "may be merely His invitation to *enter the fold*," but "includes, or even primarily means, the invitation to *enter the kingdom which will be inaugurated when the Lord Jesus is revealed in glory*" (P2. 31). "Kingdom means in several undoubted instances

the *present* kingdom of God's grace (Rom. xiv. 17 ; 1 Cor. iv. 20 ; Col. i. 13) ; its reference in the main is to the future, this is the case here " (Mg. 27). " Usually applied to the initial act of salvation as a Divine invitation carrying with it great responsibilities " (Mg. 93). There is " no reason however why the word should not be definitely extended to include the final issue of the calling, [much in the sense of τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως in Phil. iii. 14 or κλήσεως ἐπουρανίου in Heb. iii." (Mg. 93).

III. THE RESULTS OF THE INVITATION.—" The glory of our Lord Jesus Christ " (Pz. 78). Christ carries out the work He has begun. He is pledged to its success. " ' He Who calls you to be saints, has an interest in your sanctification.' ' Calls,' not ' called ' (ὁ καλῶν not ὁ καλέσας). He is their Caller, their Inviter ; that is His relation to the converts. He will, therefore, be true to His character as One Who calls men to a holy life. He does not call and then leave those who are called to fail for want of His help. If they strive to respond to His invitation, they are sure to be sanctified and preserved " (P. I 105). " The absolute use of ποιήσει in i. 5. 24, is very striking, and sets in bold relief the *doing* with which God accompanies His *calling* " (Mg. 79). " ' Calling ' is used in its technical sense of ' call to the kingdom,' with the further idea, as throughout the Pauline Eps., that the calling as God's act has been effectual " (Mg. 26). " The call implies that God will faithfully carry out the process of ἀγιάζεσθαι and τηρεῖσθαι, which is the divine side of the human endeavour outlined in the preceding verse " (Mt. 43). " The divine purpose does not work automatically, but implies the co-operation of Christians—in this case, a resolute steadfastness resting on loyalty to the apostolic gospel " (Mt. 50). " ' Calling ' in ii. 1, 12, is ' the position you are called to occupy,' as heirs of this splendid future. This implies that a certain period of moral ripening must precede the final crisis " (Mt. 47).

