

Northern Palestine) and the hinder parts of the earth to thy great treasuries in Uas (= Western Thebes)."

Looking to these latter facts we may perhaps see in Balaam's mention of "the ships from Chittim," that are to break the power of Asshur, a reference to this as a new form of attack from the old hereditary enemy of Assyria, using the ships and seafaring population of Cyprus as a fresh and formidable weapon. Commonly the prediction has been thought to have found its fulfilment in the expeditions of Alexander the Great, and later on in those of the Romans; but it would be quite in accordance with the analogy of other historical prophecies to assume that here also there might be both an earlier and a later accomplishment, the one the pledge and earnest of the other; the one within the horizon of the prophet's gaze, the other beyond it.

E. H. PLUMPTRE.

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### CHRIST'S PROPHECIES OF HIS OWN DEATH.

I HAVE heard even the most sincere believers in our Lord's resurrection and Divinity express grave doubts whether the account given in our Gospels of his own predictions of his death on the cross, and of his resurrection, are consistent with the admitted dismay and general doubt into which the crucifixion actually threw the apostles; and while even the most earnest believers feel this difficulty, the anti-supernaturalists, of course, go further and further every day in their use of the argument from "anachronism," and their rejection of everything, even in the oldest of the Gospels, which implies that the future was ever in any degree really present to the mind of Jesus. M. Ernest Havet has just been writing an essay in the *Revue des Deux*

*Mondes*, in which he maintains that even the words of our Lord, used in the institution of the Communion Service, were obviously unhistorical, and were borrowed by the evangelists from St. Paul, M. Havet's reason (which he has not as yet published) no doubt being that these words imply the clearest possible foresight of the event of the following day, and also of the effect that event would have in forming the basis of the most sacred act of Christian worship for the Church in the years to come. In precisely the same spirit M. Havet is inclined to reject as unhistorical our Lord's denunciation of the Pharisees, which implies, to his mind, another "anachronism," a breach between the disciples of Jesus and formal Judaism, which he regards as impossible till long afterwards; and he appeals to Gamaliel's moderate counsels when the persecution of Peter and John took place, to shew that the Pharisees were disposed rather to deal leniently with the disciples of Jesus, than to regard them as their own special antagonists. In very much the same fashion, I apprehend, the later historians of the nineteenth century, if they should have but a brief outline of the events it contains, might demonstrate the gross "anachronism" in the supposition that Mr. Gladstone, after writing and speaking so much in favour of the English Church and of the faith of that Church, had first taken away its chief possessions in Ireland, and next facilitated the entrance of atheists and agnostics into the House of Commons. There is nothing more characteristic of true history than what the ultra-sceptics call obvious "anachronisms." What was it which made St. Paul, who, as he himself boasted, was "a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee," the most ardent of all the antagonists, not merely of Pharisaism, but of Judaism itself, so soon as he learnt to believe that Judaism had been fulfilled in the Gospel of Christ? Of course it was that very side of St. Paul which had previously made him exhaust

all the spiritual resources of Pharisaism before he found that in order to live truly, even as a Pharisee, he must live a life which reached far beyond Pharisaism—one in which true Pharisaism ultimately found its euthanasia? And that which brought the disciple to his conflict with Pharisaism—namely, his ardent desire to live the Jewish life truly—must have brought the Master to the same conflict earlier and with greater force. The very resolve of Jesus to which M. Havet refers, I mean the resolve to go first “to the lost sheep of the House of Israel,” “not to take the children’s bread and cast it to the dogs,” was the natural and necessary antecedent of the deep conviction that “many shall come from the east and from the west, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness.” Indeed, was it not the faith of a Roman centurion, who was recommended to our Lord by Jews for his generosity in building the Jews a synagogue, which first led to Christ’s remark, that He “had not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” What, indeed, could better prepare for a true judgment on the comparative openness of the Jewish and Gentile minds for Divine truth, than that exclusive mission to the Jews, which revealed, first to the Master, and then to the great disciple, what it was that the Jews lacked? (As for Gamaliel’s plea in favour of toleration, one must remember that it was offered to a Sadducee high priest, and was the plea of the natural leader of the hierarchical Opposition.)

Now the supposed “anachronism” in our Lord’s anticipation of the break-up of the Jewish monopoly of revelation, at the very time when He was jealous of expending any of his Divine resources on those who were not of the fold of Israel, seems to me to offer a very instructive parallel to the other supposed “anachronism”—the anticipation of his own death and resurrection at a time

when his disciples were so little prepared to understand his meaning, that they remembered afterwards that they had questioned one with another "what the rising from the dead should mean." There was no true anachronism in either case; nothing but that superficial paradox, which, as I have said, is one of the commonest criteria of genuine history. The denunciations of Pharisaism all rose out of our Lord's desire to keep to the spirit of the purest Pharisaism, and not to let the forms overload and suffocate the spirit. He took the horror of defilement in its deepest sense, and asked whether it was "the unwashed hands," and the things which entered into men, which defiled them, or rather evil thoughts and that which came out of men that defiled them. He took the spirit of humility and sacrifice in its deepest sense, and asked whether it was public humiliation and ostentatious sacrifice, or inward contrition and private penitence, which won the grace of God. Thus it was the value of our Lord for the reality, of which Pharisaism was only the symbol, that led to his denunciation of the outward form from which the heart was wanting.

And exactly in the same way, as it seems to me, we may explain the case of the supposed "anachronism" in relation to our Lord's prophecy of his own death and resurrection—though here of course we cannot ignore the supernatural prescience which is also present. There is no anachronism at all in the order of thought, but a very close moral connexion of a similar kind. The first plain mention of our Lord's sufferings and death was, as everybody knows, elicited at some spot near Cæsarea Philippi, by Peter's profession of his personal belief that Jesus is "the Christ." The instant Peter makes that confession, Jesus, we are told by St. Mark, probably the earliest evangelist, "charged them that they should tell no man," well knowing that as yet their idea of Christ was a totally false one, and would

lead, if they spoke of it, to boasts entirely inconsistent both with what Christ really was, and was to be, and with what He wished to teach them. "And He began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And He spake that saying openly" [plainly, without metaphor or any vagueness capable of misconstruction, is, I suppose, St. Mark's meaning in the word *παρρησίᾳ*]. "And Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him. But when He had turned about and looked on his disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. And when He had called the people unto Him with his disciples, He said, Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."

Here it seems to me that there is a very distinct explanation of the ground of what is regarded as the "anachronism" in the order of thought. For the first time Christ finds his apostles thinking of Him as the true Messiah. He forbids them to publish that belief; assures them that it is true, but that it means shame and death before glory of any kind; and then immediately, and publicly, He begins in his teaching, even to the multitude, to connect his own career and that of all who would follow Him, with self-denial, suffering, the loss of life and all that life counts dear. In other words, the moment He finds that his disciples have begun to believe in his true spiritual power and glory, He commences that long course of lessons of which the drift is to try to impress on them that true spiritual power and glory is, for Him and all who would follow Him, indissoluble from all that seems least

like earthly power or glory. And let me recall how often, and emphatically, the same lesson is enjoined. No sooner have the three most trusted of his apostles seen the vision in which Jesus appeared transfigured and engaged in conversation with other shining figures, which they held to be those of Moses and Elijah, and heard a voice proclaiming Him the Son of God, than, as they come down the hill-side, Christ again impresses upon them not to tell others the vision "till the Son of man shall be risen from the dead," and then goes on to warn them "how it is written of the Son of man, that He must suffer many things and be set at nought." Immediately after this, St. Mark states that they "passed through Galilee, and He would not that any man should know it. For He taught his disciples, and said unto them, that the Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him, and after that He is killed, He shall rise the third day; but they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask Him;" and again, as if He could not sufficiently enforce his view of what the Messiah's glory really involved in the way of humiliation and suffering, St. Mark represents Him as once more almost immediately reiterating, that if any man desires to be great "the same shall be last of all, and the servant of all." And thenceforward the saying about the first that shall be last, and the last first, seems ever on his lips. Soon after this the final journey to Jerusalem begins. And as they go up to Jerusalem, "Jesus went before them and they were amazed, and as they followed, they were afraid. And He took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen to Him, saying, Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles: and they shall mock Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him; and the third day He shall rise again." Yet

no sooner, apparently, are the words out of his mouth—at least the narrative of St. Mark so represents it—than the sons of Zebedee come to Him with the request to sit, one on his right hand and the other on his left, in his glory. The word “glory” strikes the note of their expectation; and what is our Lord’s reply? It is to ask them if they are prepared to suffer as He is going to suffer, and to prophesy that they shall suffer as He is going to suffer; and further, to teach not only the two ambitious apostles, but all of them, that true “glory” for them is to be servants of all, “for even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many.” When Jesus reaches Jerusalem, and has made what is called the triumphant entry, He immediately endeavours to obliterate the sense of exultation which this probably caused to his apostles, by telling the parable of the Lord of the Vineyard, who having sent servant after servant to obtain the fruits of his vineyard, at last sent his own son, whom the husbandmen slay that the vineyard may be theirs. And then at the feast in Bethany, our Lord deepens the sense of coming calamity by assuring his disciples that the ointment poured upon Him is “to anoint his body for the burying.” Moreover, at his last passover, He prophesies the betrayal of Judas, the denial of Peter, and the scattering of all his disciples, besides instituting the great memorial service in which He speaks of his own body and blood about to be offered, as the bread and wine of life, and as voluntarily bestowed for the renewal of all who trust in Him.

Now I have taken all this summary exclusively from the Gospel of St. Mark, because even the extreme sceptics of to-day regard St. Mark’s as the oldest of the Gospels, and attach more historical importance to its statements than to those of any other. I think they are right in this estimate for a double reason—first, that St. Mark ignores entirely

the accounts given in the other Gospels of the birth and Divine origin of Jesus, and that all the best manuscripts of St. Mark leave the story of the resurrection at its very outset without any of the details embodied in St. Paul's account; and next, that, in the Galilean portions of the narrative especially, there are a great number of touches apparently due to the clearest personal memory, which no other Gospel contains—such touches I mean as the remark that there were also with the boat in which our Lord passed over the lake when He stilled the storm, “other little ships”—or the recollection of the Hebrew words in which our Lord addressed the daughter of Jairus, “*Talitha cumi,*” with the statement that she was of the age of twelve years—or the remark made to our Lord before the feeding of the five thousand, that two hundred denarii would hardly buy food for the multitude (a remark which only St. John besides reports), as well as a great number of other touches of the same kind, all of them tending to shew that either an eye-witness had recorded these touches, or that they were deliberately invented by a writer who wanted to paint up a faded picture. This last was the view once taken of St. Mark's Gospel by rationalistic critics, but latterly it has been given up even by the most sceptical, chiefly, I think, because they value the negative evidence of the Gospel as regards the opening and close of our Lord's career, more than they distrust the touches of local colour to which I have referred. And it is obvious that the two sets of characteristics must be estimated together. A painter anxious to make the most of our Lord's career for pictorial purposes, would never have rushed into the middle of his subject as St. Mark does, without any notice of Christ's birth, childhood, or origin; and would certainly not have broken it off (unless through some cause over which he had no control) at the very point at which his triumph over death was to be recounted. And even if we suppose that



the fragmentary close was due to some unexpected interruption of the writer's labours, its abrupt opening seems altogether inconsistent with the plan of a restoring and retouching artist. Moreover, the peculiar touches themselves are seldom really in any artistic sense *picturesque*. The mention of the "green" grass on which the five thousand were seated when fed by Jesus, is so; but most of the others read more like the matter of fact tokens of accurate memory than the touches of a beautifying artist. Thus St. Mark records that when James and John were called they left their father Zebedee in the ship "with the hired servants," a particular mentioned by no other evangelist, and quite without picturesque effect. So again in the mention of the manner in which the man sick of the palsy was got into the house where Jesus was in Capernaum, in spite of the crowd which blocked the entrance, St. Mark says "*they uncovered the roof where He was; and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay,*" while St. Matthew does not mention the mode of getting at Jesus at all, and St. Luke only says (probably deriving and abbreviating his account from the elder evangelist), "They went upon the house-top and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus;" so that here again St. Mark appears just to incorporate a rude fragment of fact, namely, that they broke up the roof before they could make room for letting down the couch, just because it was a circumstance recorded in the memory of the narrator, not in the least for any pictorial effect.

I insist on this point because it has a good deal of bearing on the question as to these prophecies of our Lord's death. St. Mark not only records all these prophecies with much minuteness, but records them with circumstances not noticed by the other evangelists. For instance, the assertion that Jesus spoke the saying as to

his own rejection by the elders, and execution, and resurrection, quite straightforwardly (*παρρησίῳ*), that is, without any sort of symbolic language, is peculiar to St. Mark, as is the statement that the rebuke to Peter was *not* privately given, but given "when He had turned about and looked on the disciples." So again the statement on the same occasion, that He called the people to Him before declaring, "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me," is made as though St. Mark intended to draw special attention to the fact that the teaching as to Christ's own coming humiliation, and the humiliation of all his true disciples, was delivered with a careful purpose of publicity, and in striking contrast to his recent command to his disciples not to publish their own belief in his Messiahship. So again after the transfiguration, St. Mark, and St. Mark alone, records that when the three apostles were prohibited from speaking of what they had seen till after the Son of man had risen from the dead, "they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean." And in relation to the private journey of our Lord through Galilee, St. Mark records carefully that when our Lord repeated his words that "the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him; and after that He is killed, He shall rise the third day," "they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask Him," while St. Luke, repeating the statement as to the failure to understand and the fear to ask for explanations, applies it only to the sad part of the prediction, and omits altogether in this place the reference to the resurrection on the third day, to which, if I read the Gospel rightly, the failure to understand and fear to ask for explanations specially applied. And lastly, when our Lord goes up to Jerusalem for the last time, it is St. Mark alone who records that

something in his mien and gestures, as He went before them, amazed them, and made them afraid, before the teaching as to the fate in store for Him was once again reiterated carefully to their incredulous ears. If, then, we can trust St. Mark at all, it is clear that his account is founded on the observations of an eye-witness, and an eye-witness who had noted with careful and vivid distinctness all the occasions on which Jesus had predicted his death and resurrection to his apostles, and who was profoundly impressed with the fact both of the anxiety He had shewn in trying to prepare them in the most impressive manner for what was coming, and of their own inability to realize his meaning, and this moreover especially, as it would seem, as to the resurrection from the dead.

Of course the sceptical explanation of these features in the narrative—features, it must be remembered, characterizing especially and emphatically the narrative of the oldest, as is now thought, of the Gospels—is, that the Gospel never having been written, at all events in its present form, till after the destruction of Jerusalem, these accounts of our Lord's predictions were largely coloured by after-thoughts derived from the actual event, and made to account for the resurrection, which was then believed, though erroneously believed, to have followed it. But will this explanation hold water at all, unless indeed on the supposition now almost universally abandoned by sane critics, that the Gospel was a deliberate forgery, made for dogmatic purposes? For remember we have not only to account for predictions absolutely essential to the Gospel, such as those which I am now discussing, but for other predictions quite as marvellous, which are not in the least essential to it—the prediction of Judas's treachery, of Peter's denial, and of Christ's approaching burial, for which our Lord declared that the precious ointment at the feast of Bethany was a preparation. Where was the imaginative tempta-

tion to the Church of embodying in its history our Lord's anticipation of the treachery of one of his own chosen twelve, an anticipation which would seem to throw doubts on the wisdom of his own selection of the traitor? M. Havet, I observe, regards as completely unhistorical the whole story of Judas's treachery; and this is consistent in him. But how in the world should that have been invented by a writer, writing after the siege of Jerusalem? And why should a special prediction of it have been also invented, even if a false tradition had arisen as to the fact itself? The story reflected no obvious credit either on the Church or on the prescience of its Head, since it created the difficulty which has so often been suggested since, namely, that Jesus should have chosen for an apostle one whose treachery He foresaw. Again, where was the temptation to the infant Church of reading back into its history the prediction of Peter's cowardice, a prediction which seemed to render that cowardice at once so much less likely and so much less excusable? And to whom could it have occurred, years after the event, to say that our Lord spoke of the ointment with which He was anointed several days before the crucifixion as preparing Him "for his burial," if no such saying had really escaped Him? These wholly non-essential predictions of the smaller and more personal kind are just as marvellous, as predictions, as the predictions of the crucifixion, and resurrection, and the siege of Jerusalem. M. Havet's rejection of the institution of the sacrament of our Lord's body and blood is founded apparently on the conjecture that it was borrowed by the evangelists from St. Paul's special revelation, which he thinks unhistoric; but not only is this mere assumption, but it is very gratuitous assumption, seeing that St. Paul never suggests any one of the three minor predictions I have mentioned, while these at least are not at all predictions of a kind to be invented

after the minuter interests of the last days of the life of Jesus had merged in the greater interest of the destiny of the gospel itself. And yet all these predictions must be rejected by the anti-supernaturalist, and are so rejected, for the very reason that they are predictions, and therefore inconsistent with the obvious law of human ignorance.

What I want to press then is this, that in St. Mark's Gospel at least, we have a document which even the sceptics usually assume to have been written in good faith, a document moreover full of our Lord's foresight, foresight exerted now on smaller personal matters, now again on larger and more momentous interests affecting the very heart of his religion. But the supernatural foresight which the Gospel contains, so far from being exclusively of the kind that would chiefly interest the world forty years after our Lord's crucifixion, is concerned, in three cases at least, with personal matters touching the apostles and the woman who anointed Him at Bethany, matters which could hardly by any possibility, have been invented a generation after the event, and invented by a writer moreover who had never heard of the miraculous birth, and who left unrecorded the greater part of the story of the resurrection. These exercises of foresight are in no respects less remarkable or less exact than the greater prophecies of the crucifixion itself, the resurrection, and the destruction of Jerusalem, which, as is now assumed, were slowly elaborated in the imaginations of loving disciples who had brooded long and affectionately over the past, and now and then had, as they thought, obtained brilliant glimpses of a visionary present. If there is any reason to date the greater prophecies after the event, there is much more reason to date the lesser prophecies after the event also, for the record of them *could* not have been penned before it; but then in their case you must ascribe their invention to a time so close to the death of Jesus as to make of them definite forgeries,

and not merely slow growths of a traditional imagination. And this seems to me to apply also to St. Mark's accounts of our Lord's prophecies of his own death and resurrection, and the mode in which they were enforced on the disciples. These accounts are so precise, so full of minute touches, so evidently careful, that if they were invented after the event, they must have been intentional forgeries, not imaginatively coloured traditions. They all converge to one point—to shew that Jesus fully appreciated the extraordinary difficulty his disciples would find in accepting the belief in a suffering and crucified Messiah, and in the very unsensational because private resurrection which they witnessed, and did all in his power, by precept upon precept, by rebuke, by striking and emphatic gesture, by parable, and by a solemnly instituted public rite, to sow in their very hearts the truth of truths which He was anxious to plant there, a seed at once of humiliation and of hope.

Well, it may be said, but if this be admitted, how can we account for the singular ill-success of the endeavour? Can it be denied that as a matter of fact the apostles were plunged in despair? Does not St. Luke himself tell us that when the women of the company announced the resurrection of the Lord, “their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not”? To this I reply first, that, though the apostles undoubtedly were thrown into a state of bewilderment, not to say despair, we may very well exaggerate that despair, for we have no minute account of their state of mind. The same authority who describes them as receiving the news of the resurrection with unbelief as an idle tale, goes on to say that Peter at once ran to the sepulchre, which was not the act of blank unbelief. And at all events, this is clear, that our Lord's teaching concerning his death and resurrection was not so unfruitful of warning as his personal prophecies of the treachery of Judas and the denial of Peter, neither of which prevented

the subject of it from fulfilling the prediction uttered half as warning, half as prophecy. But is it really reasonable to suppose that all our Lord could do to prepare his disciples for what they were to expect, would have been sufficient to steel them against the shock of the crucifixion? A body of helpless and ignorant men, without apparently one man of genius, or one man of commanding power among them, seeing the popular feeling alienated, their master dead and buried, and the universal conviction that all was over, must have had an overflowing stock of faith indeed if they had felt no despondency, no revulsion of feeling, no suspicion that they had been living in dream-land all this time, and that now at last they were awaking to the dreary truth. St. Luke's description of the actual state of feeling as expressed by the disciples on the way to Emmaus is very much I think what we ought to have expected as the result of Christ's predictions, and that state of feeling is not described as really hopeless: "But we trusted that it had been He which should have delivered Israel, and beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that He was alive; and certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said; but Him they saw not." It seems to me that the clearest prediction can do very little to weaken the shock of reality on a mind not yet prepared for that reality by its own intellectual and moral growth. Prediction did not make Peter feel less keenly the shame and shrinking of belonging to one who was for the moment the subject of universal mockery, and this though he had but a few minutes before, in a very different moral atmosphere, professed, and truly professed, that it would

be easier for him to go to prison and to death with Jesus, than to deny Him. And so, too, when every one and everything seemed to bear witness that the influence of Jesus was at an end, it was not wonderful that the power of a few prophecies, even though partly fulfilled, was insufficient to nerve the apostles' hearts to unflinching trust.

But what to me does seem really and absolutely incredible is the sceptical assumption that, this being the moral situation, yet in that situation, and without any event which could reasonably restore the confidence of the apostles in their Master, without any man of genius among them at all resembling the Apostle of the Gentiles, who was still numbered amongst their worst enemies, they should have recovered their confidence, begun for themselves, without Jesus, a new and more hopeful career than any they had struck out with Him, persuaded themselves of a resurrection which had not only never occurred but never even been foreshadowed, and contrived to communicate their belief to a rapidly growing number of believers who found not only comfort but power, not only faith but life and joy in the very community which had but yesterday been utterly prostrated by the disappearance of its Lord and by the sudden paralysis of its most passionate hopes.

R. H. HUTTON.