

## ENOCH'S GOSPEL.

*Genesis* v. 21-24 ; *Hebrews* xi. 5, 6 ; *Jude* 14, 15.

THE Book of Genesis is for the most part, as is now well known, composed of "documents," which were already ancient some four thousand years ago, when Moses wrote. And these venerable documents are often, as from their antiquity we should expect them to be, little more than pedigrees or genealogies, brief chronicles of descent from sire to son ; though at times, when any great name comes up, a few pregnant and picturesque words are appended, to tell us of some signal service which the bearer of that name rendered to his kind, or to trace the outlines of some remarkable event in which he took part. When we commence anything like a real study of the Book, we are first amazed, and then delighted, to find how largely it is made up of citations from those ancient documents ; amazed at finding that what we took to be the work of one author and one age is in fact the work of many authors of different ages ; and yet delighted at finding in it signs of accuracy and research for which we had not looked : for what could more convincingly authenticate his work to us than the fact that, having to write the history of two thousand years which had elapsed before his birth, Moses should cite the very words of the authorities on which he relied, and from which he had learned much of what he knew ?

I. "The book of the generations of Adam" (*Gen.* v. 1), is one of the earliest of these writings, one of the oldest documents in the world therefore. Like many of the rest, it is a pedigree—a pedigree which traces the descent of the

human family from Adam to Noah. It says very little of the elder persons in the roll, and only expands into historical detail when it reaches the great catastrophe of the Flood. Its unknown author commences with Adam and Eve, telling us no more of them than that God created them *in his own likeness*, and that He *blessed* them; but telling us, ah, how much in these simple words, if only we have skill to read them! Then he passes over six generations, giving us only the names of the successive patriarchs, with the years in which they were born and died. The dry uniformity of this antique genealogy is not once broken, there is no delineation of character, no record of events, till we reach the name of Enoch, "seventh from Adam." But here, moved partly by the exceptional beauty of his character, and partly by the singular termination of his career, the chronicler pauses for a moment, and lights up his dry list of names with a few graphic touches which bring the man and his destiny vividly before us. "Enoch *walked with God*," he says, so marking the ruling tone or bent of his life; "*and he was not, for God took him*," so marking the singular character of his end. Nay, he *repeats* the former of these expressive phrases (verses 22 and 24), "Enoch walked with God;" as if to imply that, strange as was his end, the manner of the patriarch's life was even more momentous and significant than the manner of his death; as of course it was, since, always, it is how a man lives which determines how he shall die. Walking *with God* is walking *to God*.

These two brief phrases comprise all that either Moses, or the ancient chronicler whom he quoted, have to tell us about the saintly Enoch and his saintly end. But what *they* have told us is at once confirmed and supplemented by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and by St. Jude. The former takes these ancient words for his text and comments on them thus (Heb. xi. 5, 6): "*By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because*

God *translated* him, for before his translation *he had this testimony, that he had pleased God* : but without faith it is impossible to please him ; for *he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him.*" The New Testament Apostle confirms Moses therefore, for he tells us that Enoch had "come" to God and "pleased" Him by his daily "walk" of obedience to the Divine Will, and that Enoch "was not," because "God took him" to Himself. But he also enlarges our conception of Enoch's life, by tracing his obedience to "faith;" faith that God *is*, and that He rewards those who seek after Him; while he glorifies our conception of his end, his "taking," by telling us that it was a taking *up* and not simply a taking *away*, a translation and not merely a death.

It is impossible to read these verses in the Hebrews attentively, however, without asking one critical question of interest and importance. The whole argument of the passage turns on Enoch's having received, before his translation, "this testimony, that he had pleased God;" and the writer plainly assumes this testimony as a fact well known to every student of the ancient Scriptures. But where do we find any record of such a testimony having been borne to Enoch? In the *Hebrew* Scriptures, nowhere. It is to be found only in the Greek version, the Septuagint, in which the Hebrew for "*Enoch walked with God,*" is, by an obvious blunder, translated "*Enoch pleased God.*" So that an inspired writer in the New Testament finds an argument on a blunder, or an erroneous rendering of what an inspired writer in the Old Testament had indited! A terrible fact to those who believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible; but one which has no terrors for as many of us as read the Bible after the spirit, and not after the letter. For *must* not a man who walks with God believe in God, believe both that He is—and that He is a Rewarder of all who put their trust in Him? and is not every man who

thus walks with God, whose life is spent in a constant and growing communion with Him, sure to please Him, and to receive some testimony that he has pleased Him?

St. Jude, like the writer to the Hebrews, at once confirms and expands Moses' brief description of Enoch. For the antique phrase "Enoch *walked with God*," has a technical, as well as a general meaning. In general it denotes an obedient life; or what, as the obedience is rendered to *God*, we should call a religious or a devout life, a life spent under a constant sense of the Divine Presence, a conscious conformity to the Divine Laws, a deep and strengthening fellowship with the Divine Spirit. But, technically, in the Jewish and Rabbinical use of it, it denotes a *prophetic* life. It implies, that God walked with the man who walked with Him, held him for his friend, spoke to him and moved him to speak, revealed his will to him and prompted him to disclose that will to others and to urge it upon them. And it is this prophetic side of his character which St. Jude brings out when he writes (verses 14, 15): "and *Enoch*, seventh from Adam, *prophesied*, saying: Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute justice upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodlily wrought, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." St. Jude, therefore, confirms both Moses and the writer to the Hebrews. He, too, implies both that Enoch walked with God, and that he believed in God as the true Ruler and Judge of men; for how else should Enoch have affirmed that God would come "to execute justice" on all? But he enlarges our sense of what the Hebrew Lawgiver and the Christian Evangelist meant and implied, both by painting in the darkest hues the excessive ungodliness of the time in which Enoch lived a godly life—so enhancing our conception of his saintliness; and by teaching that he added the prophetic to the saintly char-

acter—justifying the ways of God with man, and proclaiming an advent, a judgment, in which God Himself would appear to justify his own ways.

Here too, however, a critical question is sure to meet the thoughtful reader. For no one can well read these verses in Jude, without being struck by a certain Rabbinical tone in them, an artificial and affected tone, alien to the simplicity of the New Testament Scriptures. The mere way in which the word “ungodly” is played upon and repeated, twisted and turned about, from noun to adjective, from verb to adverb, is enough to suggest that he is giving us, not his own work, but that of another hand. The suggestion has been verified. It has been discovered that the prophecy which he puts into the mouth of the patriarch is a quotation from an uninspired writing—“The Book of Enoch.” This “Book” was written by a Jew of Palestine, at least a hundred years before the birth of Christ, and is in every way one of the most remarkable productions of its time. The main object of the pious Jew who wrote it was, apparently, to throw into a fictitious form a much more spiritual conception of the prophecies concerning the Messiah than was then generally entertained, or than it would have been quite safe for him perhaps to utter as from his own lips. Familiar with the Hebrew traditions concerning Enoch, he makes Enoch his mouthpiece; and, by throwing back his words to antediluvian times, gives to present truth an antique form, just as French men of letters often veiled their satires and rebukes of the Imperial tyranny under the thin disguise of Roman history and Latin names.

His book is a strange farrago of ancient traditions of the world before the flood, Rabbinical fables, and speculations concerning the world to come, and prophetic interpretations of a singularly pure and lofty kind. According to him, Enoch foresaw and foretold the destruction of

mankind by the Deluge, exhorted the men of his generation to amend their evil ways, penetrated with prophetic eye to the most distant future, lived a retired life in intercourse with angels and spirits, and in meditation on divine things, until he had explored all the mysteries of earth and heaven.

But the most remarkable feature of this book is, unquestionably, its reading of the Messianic traditions. Not only does it blend the allusions to the time of the Messiah ("the coming world" or "age") scattered through the Prophets into "one grand picture of unspeakable bliss, unalloyed virtue, and unlimited knowledge." It also represents Enoch as seeing in the Messiah both the King and the Judge of the world, both the Son of Man and the "Son of God from all eternity." This Son of God and Son of Man is gifted with the wisdom which knows all mysteries; the Spirit in all its fulness is poured out in Him; his glory endureth for ever; He shares the throne of God's majesty; kings and princes will worship Him and invoke his mercy. He pre-existed before all time. "Before the sun and the signs were made, and the stars of heaven were created, his name was already proclaimed before the Lord of all spirits." "Before the creation of the world He was elected." Although still unknown to the children of the world, He is already revealed to the pious by prophecy, and is praised by the angels in heaven. And, at last, He will come to judge the world in righteousness, and to render to every man his due.<sup>1</sup>

To have framed this large and spiritual conception of Christ and his work more than a hundred years before Christ came and dwelt among us, was, it must be admitted,

<sup>1</sup> As I possess only Archbishop Laurence's English translation (A.D. 1838) of the Ethiopic Version of the Book of Enoch, I have based my brief description of it mainly on the learned Dr. Kalisch's report of it in his well-known Commentary on the Pentateuch.

a remarkable achievement. It would, of course, have been quite impossible in the days of Enoch, before any of the great Messianic predictions had been uttered. Nor does the writer of the Book of Enoch seriously attribute it to the Patriarch. It is his own thought which he publishes under a feigned name, either to give it authority or to avoid a dangerous responsibility. But the mere fact that he should have selected Enoch for his mouthpiece shews, I think, how deep and indelible was the impression which the Patriarch had made on the popular mind, both as prophet and as saint.

Nor is this the only fact which points in the same direction. The Rabbinical writings contain many allusions both to the exceptional character of the man and to his singular fate. And even in the Apocrypha we read of him (Ecclus. xlv. 16), "He pleased the Lord, and was translated, *being a pattern of repentance*": a phrase which adds a new feature to our conception of him. It is based, I suppose, on an inference frequently drawn in ancient times from Genesis v. 22, where we read, "And Enoch walked with God *after* he begat Methuselah three hundred years": the implication being, or being taken to be, that the birth of his firstborn was a crisis and turning point in his religious history; that, whereas up to that hour he had gone with the multitude to do evil, he now repented and commenced a life of obedience, meditation, and devotion—so becoming "a pattern of repentance" to all who should come after him.

The fame of Enoch, of his prophetic work and singular end, was not even confined to the Jewish world. It went out into all the earth, and still lives in many an old world legend. Thus, for example, both Stephanus Byzantium and Suidas tell us of a Phrygian sage—whose very name, "Annæus," is but another form of Channoch or Enoch—of whom ancient tradition reports that he lived before

the flood of Deucalion, attained an age of more than three hundred years, foresaw the flood, gathered all the people into a temple and made supplication for them to God, and was finally transported into heaven.

It is only men of mark and weight who leave such deep and enduring footprints on the sands of time as these. And hence, though we must not accept the voice of mere tradition as adding to our real knowledge of what Enoch was and did, it is nevertheless worth while to collect and consider these legendary additions to the true story of his life; for we may legitimately find in them both a general confirmation of all that the Bible tells us of the exceptional force and beauty of his character, and, in so far as they fairly serve that purpose, useful illustrations of the special points which the Sacred Record touches with an emphatic finger. The legendary aureole does not gather round the heads of men who have no light in themselves, and have shewn no power to lead and impress their fellows.

We have now before us, I believe, all that is known of Enoch; and, in the legends and traditions to which I have referred, even more than is absolutely *known* of him, though even these are for the most part quite consistent with the sacred and authentic records of his life. And, therefore, we may proceed with some confidence to formulate our conception both of the man and of his end; of the tenor of his life, and of the manner of his death.

II. The tenor of his life is summed up in the phrase, "*He walked with God.*" But this simple phrase, if we duly reflect on it, contains much and suggests much.

No doubt, as we are told in the Epistle to the Hebrews, *faith* was the root of all that was good and pure in Enoch's character; faith in God as the Ruler and Judge of men, as still present and still active in the world He made, as



punishing men for their sins even when they seem to prosper in them, and as rewarding those who seek and serve Him although his service should seem to entail on them loss and pain and contumely. But this "faith" may assume many forms; breeding in one man a habit of contemplation, and in another a devotional habit; prompting this man to speak, and that man to act, for God. And it says much for Enoch, much for the roundness and completeness of his character, that his faith in God seems to have wrought *all* these effects on him; making him a thinker, and perhaps a thinker with a touch of the mystic in him, drawing him into an habitual and growing communion with God, moving him to rebuke the sins of men and to warn them of the judgments which follow hard on the heels of sin, and yet rendering him zealous in every good work.

Whether or not he was, as the Apocrypha tells us, "a pattern of repentance," whether or not he had run with the wicked antediluvian world to the same excess of riot until the birth of his firstborn, and was then suddenly seized with compunction, we cannot authoritatively decide; but if we know anything of ourselves and of our fellows, we know that no man is without sin, and that the inward stains of sin are only to be washed out by the tears of penitence. We are expressly told, too, that Enoch "came," or "*drew near*" to God, before he walked with Him; and who that has risen into the peace of fellowship with God, or even into the imperfect peace of an imperfect fellowship with Him, does not know what an agony is implied in this approach to God, what pangs of repentance and shame precede the blessedness of the man whose sin is forgiven, whose iniquity is removed?

Nor, as we learn both from authority and experience, can "two walk together except they be agreed." We choose our companions, and much more, our most intimate

companion and friend in the journey of life, from sympathy; for their likeness to us and for those subtle unlikenesses which make their character the complement of our own; because they are strong where we are weak but wish to be strong, because we see in them what we crave to see in ourselves. We cannot "walk with" one with whom we are at variance, whose character is not only dissimilar but antagonistic to ours, who most frets and offends us when he is most himself; though we may come to walk in the most intimate fellowship with one whom, before we knew him, or while we misread him, we regarded with suspicion and distrust. And, therefore, when we are told that Enoch drew near and walked with God, we may reasonably infer that he had overcome the alienation or indifference of nature, that he had been reconciled to God, come to an understanding and agreement with Him; and that his better knowledge of God, his adoption of the Divine ideal and law of human life, had constrained him to confess and renounce the sins by which he had once been estranged from his Maker and Friend.

*Obedience* is even more strongly suggested by the phrase in which Enoch's life is summarized than *penitence*. "Two cannot walk together except they be agreed." There must be a general unity of will, of aim and purpose, between them; they must have an end and a way in common, if they are to walk happily together. And when of the two companions one is human and the other Divine, one is weak, frail, mortal, while the other is all-wise, all-good, almighty, we cannot doubt which of the two wills is and should be subordinated to the other. Enoch *must* have consented to the good and perfect will of God, must have delighted to do it, before he could have entered into that close and sympathetic fellowship with Him which this expressive phrase implies.

Walking, moreover, implies *progress*; an advance from

point to point of a predetermined course, if not also an ascent toward a predetermined goal. We may assume, therefore, that, as he obeyed the will of God, Enoch came to know it, and the requisitions it made on him, more clearly and fully, to love it with a more perfect heart, to delight himself more intensely in its equity and goodness. We may assume that he *grew* in wisdom, in holiness, in charity; that as the years passed it became more certain to him, and a more welcome certainty, that the will of God was the ruling will of the universe; that it must be done on earth with whatever labour and pain, and that it would one day be done on earth as fully and happily as it is done in heaven.

There was nothing in the conditions of his time to favour this belief. It was a time of unbelief and of misbelief, and, as a natural consequence, it was also a time of the most flagrant wickedness, in which lust and violence ran to unbridled excess. Men had begun "to profane the name of the Lord" (Gen. iv. 26 *Heb.*), *i.e.* to turn from the Maker of all things and to worship the works of his hands. They were busy in inventing arts and handicrafts; in learning to farm, to tend sheep, to make and play on instruments of music, to work in bronze and iron; and they gave themselves up to their crafts and to their joy in them, forgetting the Author of every good and perfect gift. Human wickedness was growing to be so great, and the imaginations of man's heart so evil, that nothing short of the Deluge could cleanse the polluted earth (Gen. iv. 19-24; vi. 5, 6, 11-13). Whence, then, did Enoch derive his faith in God as the true Ruler of the world—the faith which lifted him above the unbelief, the selfishness, the riot and violence, with which the men of his age were filled and corrupted, and enabled him, as it were, to retreat into the garden of Paradise—to pass its long-closed and guarded gates, and to hear once more "the voice of the Lord walking in the garden in the cool of the day"? He could only have derived it, I sup-

pose, from that habit of devout meditation working on old tradition, that habit of prayerful communion with God, which the Hebrew legends with one consent attribute to him, and which, after all, we can hardly tell why, enters into and dominates all our thoughts of him. Grammar and usage and common sense compel us to find in the phrase "Enoch walked with God," the suggestion of a life of constant and progressive obedience to the Divine will, or, at most, of devotion to a prophetic ministry; but, nevertheless, the first and deepest impression it makes on us is that of thoughtful contemplation on Divine themes, of a growing communion with the Spirit of all wisdom and grace. We think first, and most, of Enoch as a saint clothed in the white stole of the mystic; as conversing with God and entering ever more freely into his mind and will; as rapt in the awe and the delight of a Divine fellowship.

Nor is it hard to justify this impression. For when we walk with the friend dearest to us, it is not the mere progress from point to point of which we are most conscious, or even the changeful scene through which we pass. We follow where we are led without much thought, whether of the way we take or of the end to which we travel. What most impresses us, that which we feel to be the very heart and secret of our privilege, is the converse we hold with him, the interchange of thought and affection, the opportunity of acquainting ourselves more fully with him and of renewing our delight in him. And this, we may be sure, was what Enoch most enjoyed in his "walk" with God. It was from this that his faith in God as the Ruler and Rewarder of men drew an ever new inspiration and force.

It was from this Divine intercourse too, no doubt, that he derived both the impulse to speak for God and the messages of warning and rebuke which he delivered to men. Why should *they* not share the bliss he knew? How could they renounce it for the base tumult of the blood, the riot of lust

and violence, in which they strove every man with his neighbour? Ah! they did not know God; they did not know how pure and kind his will was, how inexorable therefore to all offences against purity and kindness. They must be warned. They must be convinced that every sin carries its own punishment in itself, that God *must* execute justice on all and convict the ungodly of their ungodliness. And so, over the white robe of his saintliness, Enoch dons the dark rough mantle of the prophet, and carries the message of righteousness, the warning of love, to an evil and gainsaying generation.

To sum up all in a sentence: Enoch's faith shewed itself first in penitence, then in obedience, and an obedience which grew from less to more; but it flowered in that habit of devout meditation and intercourse with God which, at last, constrained him to speak, for God, to men.

III. The manner of his death, if that may be called a death which yet was none, is described by the ancient chronicler in the phrase, *He was not, for God took him*. It is a phrase which instantly arrests our attention, which would arrest it anywhere if only by its ambiguity, but which is the more striking and impressive in a document in which every other period closes with the mournful refrain, *And he died*. Of Adam, of Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahaleel, Jared—of each of these we are told that he lived so many years, and then that he died; but when we read the name of Enoch, and are expecting hear this familiar and recurring sentence once more, we are startled by a phrase at once new and never repeated, a phrase as suggestive as it is unique, "And he was not, for God took him." If these words were not so singular, if they did not present so strange a contrast to the standing refrain of "the book of the generations of Adam," we might put a very simple and easy interpretation

upon them. We might say, "Walking *with* God is walking *to* God; and, of course, when the faithful and saintly Enoch died, God took him home to Himself." But if Enoch went home to God through that gate and avenue of death through which we all have to pass in turn, why is this strange and exceptional phrase employed to denote an occurrence so common and inevitable? It must surely mean more than that?

It does mean much more than that. It was intended to convey, it did convey, the idea—not of a death, but—of a triumph over death. How the ancient world, both heathen and Hebrew, understood it, we learn from their respective traditions. The Hebrews say (Ecclus. xlv. 16) that Enoch was "translated," or, as the word means, "*transferred*"; the heathen, that he was "*transported* into heaven." And the Scriptures, both of the Old Testament and of the New, demand and confirm this conception of his end. The very verb used by Moses to denote Enoch's translation, is used in the Book of Kings to describe the rapture of Elijah again and again (2 Kings ii. 3, 5, 9, 10); while the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews puts the matter beyond all doubt, to as many as defer to his authority, by telling us in so many words that Enoch was translated *that he should not see death*. We cannot, therefore, say, as we might be tempted to say, "We must *expect* to find legends in documents so old as those quoted in the Book of Genesis, and legends which no reasonable man will now be credulous enough to mistake for history." The credit of the New Testament is involved as well as that of the Old. And it is, therefore, more fair and reasonable to read these ancient words as the Church has always read them, and to understand when we are told that Enoch "was not," what the words obviously imply—that he was no longer in the world of sense because God had caught him up, or called him back, into the supra-sensible world; and to find in the phrase *And God took him*,

not a mere euphemism for an early or a happy death, but a distinct assertion of his assumption into life eternal—his ascension into a larger and happier state of being. Read in the light of the New Testament, these singular words can mean nothing less than this—that God took him bodily up into heaven.

“But that would be a miracle!” Assuredly it would; and the Bible intends us to think of it as a miracle. Nor do I understand why this miracle, if we are to believe in miracles at all, should be incredible to us: for who does not see that it was reasonable and just, wholly consistent with the character of God, that the miracle of judgment by which the antediluvian world was destroyed should be preceded by a miracle of mercy and warning and invitation? who will not admit it to be just that the great saint of that bye-gone world should be manifestly proclaimed a saint, and that its great prophet should have his faith in God openly vindicated and confirmed?

Nor does this miracle of mercy speak to the men of that generation alone. It speaks to us all. It gives us, besides the kindly warning it bore to *them*, a hint of what great things God had provided for men had they been true to the true law of their life and held fast to Him. In the translation of Enoch, as in the rapture of Elijah and the assumption of Moses, we are taught that, for us at least, whatever it may have been to the pre-Adamite world, death is the consequence of sin; that had not we and our fathers “wronged our own souls,” we need not have passed through the purifying agony of death, but have risen, with eyes yet undimmed and natural force not abated, from this life to more life and fuller, corruption putting on incorruption, and this mortal immortality in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, without strain or pang. And which of us can doubt that, though for our sins we must needs die, yet in Christ Jesus there is provided for us something as good as, if not

better than, the grace vouchsafed to those great saints of the pre-Christian world? and that we shall pass through the cleansing ministry of death to a life even more free and large and blessed than that which was revealed to them and of which they laid hold by faith?

The awe and wonder excited by Enoch's translation in the heart of his cotemporaries has left its mark both on the Old Testament and the New. In the one we read, *he was not*, and in the other *he was not found*. Both expressions seem to imply that the event was sudden, startling, mysterious, unlooked for whether by himself or by his friends. "He was not"; kinsfolk and acquaintances missed him from his accustomed path; they sought for him, but could not find him, search where they would. They may have discovered some trace of his departure, as Elisha found the mantle of Elijah, but him himself they never saw again; his saintly life coming to a mysterious but blessed close.

"*Before* he was translated he received this testimony, that he had pleased God," but *in and by* his translation this testimony was repeated with a more audible and commanding voice. It was God's seal of approval visibly impressed on his saintly character. To be caught up out of that noisy crowd of ungodly sinners, with mouths full of hard speeches against the Friend with whom he walked, and whose unlawful deeds daily vexed his righteous soul, into a heaven of calm and peace and joy, was not only a sublime distinction; it was also a solemn Divine attestation to his purity of heart. It proved, God Himself being witness, that he had pursued the true ideal of human life when it was most hard to pursue it. It at once rebuked the corruption and violence of his neighbours, and invited them to cease from doing evil and learn to do well, to renounce their evil lusts and to walk before God in holiness and righteousness all their days. Nothing so profoundly convinces us of the singular purity and devotion of his life as



the fact that he did not see death, nor need to see it ; that while on earth, he was meet for heaven : that he should be selected as one of the three sons of men who have been counted worthy to pass from this life to the next without seeing corruption. And what could have persuaded the men of his own time that the true secret of human duty and blessedness lies in a life of active obedience to the will of God, a daily walk with Him, if they were not persuaded when one rose, not from the dead indeed, but straight from earth to heaven ?

To Enoch as prophet, no less than to Enoch as saint, God bore testimony by translating him ; for we must remember that he was not only a righteous man, but a preacher of righteousness. He saw visions which others could not see, and heard a voice which they could not hear. But these exceptional privileges came to him through great simple convictions which all the world might have shared with him, if they would. In a corrupt age, when men did evil greedily, as though there were no law and no authority but their own will, he held fast to the conviction that the world was God's world, and that therefore it was *his* will that was to be done. If the world would not have Him to reign over them, Enoch was sure that God would come to judge the world, to execute justice on all and to convict the lawless and disobedient of their sins. Nay, more ; he seems to have held that even the sins of men could not render the gracious purpose of God of none effect ; but that, when He came to judge the unholy, He would bring with Him " ten thousands of holy ones " who had not bowed the knee to iniquity.

This was his message as Prophet. And to the men of his own generation he seems to have delivered it in vain. No man believed his report. They scoffed and flung hard words, both at his message and at him. They would neither believe that it was God who really ruled the world,

nor that He would come to judge it. They asked, "Where is the promise, and where the precursors, of his coming?" They had persuaded themselves that as all things went on of old, so they would continue to go on for ever. But here, in Enoch's translation, was an event *out of* the course of use and wont, which they could not square with their unbelieving guess; an event wholly new, strange, surprising. Here was a visible judgment, a manifest coming. Here was convincing proof of a life above and beyond that of the senses; a demonstration that God did really exist, and that He did reward those who sought Him. In short, the taking up of the Prophet was an emphatic commentary on his message, a splendid illustration, an undeniable vindication of it. And for a moment a great awe fell upon the guilty multitude who had rejected it. Amazed, perplexed, incredulous, they looked for him, but "he was not"; they sought for him, but "he could not be found."

It is in vain that we attempt to explain such a miracle as this, or indeed any miracle. They would cease to be miracles if we could explain them. But on this acknowledged mystery there are four things which may be said with some degree of confidence. (1) He who believes, with Enoch, that God is, and that He is the true Lord and Lover of men, will not find it hard to believe that God has spoken to men when they needed to hear his voice, and has revealed his presence to them, his will, his love. (2) He who believes that God has spoken to men will not think it a thing incredible that, when the Infinite reveals Himself to the finite and the Eternal comes within the bounds and coasts of time, many of his ways should be wonders past finding out, or deny that that may be natural in Him which seems miraculous to us. (3) He who notes how man, by the mere effort of his will, sets in motion and controls the forces of nature, modifies, changes, diverts, hastens, or retards their operation, will not hold it unreasonable that

He who made both man and nature should exert a far more swift, subtle, and effective control over those forces by the fiat of his will. And (4), least of all will any wise man deny the existence of a spiritual force capable of setting natural forces in motion and controlling them, simply on the ground that he cannot comprehend so great a mystery, if only he bear in mind that he is equally unable to conceive or explain any of the great forces of the natural world; that "energy" is at least as great a mystery to him as the will of God is to us, and supplies a much less adequate solution of the phenomena of the universe.

No; miracles are neither impossible nor incredible, if only we can find a good and worthy end for them. And was it not a worthy and sufficient end for the miracle of Enoch's translation, that God should bear testimony to him both as saint and prophet; that He should confirm and ratify the message of his life and words, and so at once teach the men of the ancient world the true law of their life, and invite them to pursue the righteousness which is life, rather than wear the livery and take the wage of sin, which is death? *Must* not He who never leaves Himself without witness have borne some such witness as this to that ungodly age? Did it not behove Him to preach a gospel to a world that was perishing in and by its sins, before the Flood came and swept them all away? Could one expect Him to do less than that?

IV. If, now, any man ask: "But where is Enoch's gospel all this while?" I reply, "You have already heard his gospel again and again." For this gospel is to be collected from all we are told of him. But we may now, for the sake of clearness, proceed to gather it up, (1) from his traditions, (2) from his creed, (3) from his preaching, and (4), above all, from his life.

(1) The human family descended from Adam in two

lines—that of Cain, and that of Seth. The children of Cain appear to have turned away from God and the worship of God from the first, and to have carried themselves as if earth *were* their home and time their portion, eating and drinking to-day because to-morrow they died. But the children of Seth so far maintained their allegiance to the Maker of heaven and earth, as that down at least to the days of Enoch they were still called “the sons of God” (Gen. vi. 2); and even after they were corrupted by intercourse with the Cainites, they appear to have held fast the sacred traditions which they had received from Adam. Among these traditions none was more precious, none so precious as the promise made to man in the doom pronounced upon the Serpent: “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise its heel.” This promise (Gen. iii. 15), which is known as the protevangel or Gospel of Adam,<sup>1</sup> foretold the final and utter overthrow of evil in the very hour of its apparent victory. Good might have much to bear, and might suffer long at the hands of evil; but nevertheless, it would overcome in the end: the heel, often bitten, should at last crush the head of its enemy.

Enoch *may* have heard this great prophecy of hope from the lips of Adam himself; for, according to the accepted chronology, Adam lived some three hundred years after Enoch, “seventh from Adam,” was born; and we know too little of the conditions of human life in that primitive age, and so close to its fountain head, to say with any confidence what was possible and what was not. In any case we may be sure that “words of so sweet breath composed,” words so full of promise and hope, were not suffered to die; for have they not come down to us, and come down in all probability through the line of Seth? Enoch *must* have

<sup>1</sup> See THE EXPOSITOR, *New Series*, vol. vii. pp. 36 ff.

heard them, and have handed them on to those who came after him. We may fairly conclude, therefore, that this great promise made to Adam was embraced by the faith of Enoch ; and that the very basis and substance of his gospel was the assurance that, let evil flourish as it might, it was as good as dead already, since it lay under the sentence and condemnation of God. And what better, or firmer, basis could it have ?

(2) But the general hope inspired by this gracious promise took a definite form in Enoch's mind, and gave shape to what I have called his *creed*. For this creed we are indebted to the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who tells us that Enoch believed, ( $\alpha$ ) that God *is*—that He exists ; and ( $\beta$ ) that He *is*—literally, that He *becomes*, that sooner or later He will prove Himself to be—a Rewarder of them that seek Him. The creed is brief enough ; it comprises only two articles : and yet who can doubt that it contains “all that is necessary to salvation ?” By this faith Enoch was saved ; in this he conquered all the allurements and oppositions of an evil world : and that which saved him may save others. He that cometh to God “must believe,” we are told, so much as this ; but if he believe so much, it is enough ; his access to God is secured ; all things pertaining to life and godliness become possible to him—forgiveness, obedience, and the joy and peace of a Divine fellowship. With no other faith than this Enoch became both saint and prophet, and so pleased God that not even the step of death lay between him and heaven.

What, indeed, did Christ Himself come to teach us but this ; that God *is*, that He is alive, active, present, though unseen, working in us that we may know and do the good pleasure of his will ; and that He rewards us for our trust in Him by saving us out of the hand of our iniquities, and by enabling us to give ourselves up to his service, and to walk with Him in ways of holiness until we, too, are made meet

for an inheritance among the saints in light? True, He has taught us the articles of Enoch's creed with a fulness, an authority, a tenderness impossible in Enoch's day ; but, in substance, the Gospel of Enoch and the Gospel of Christ are one and the self-same Gospel, even as the germ in the acorn is one with the mighty and spreading oak which out-braves a thousand storms.

None the less, the Gospel of Enoch was, as we may see for ourselves, but a development of the Promise made to Adam. All around him were men whose chief aim it was to gratify their cruel and selfish lusts at any cost to themselves or to others ; men who had lost touch with God, and thought, therefore, that they might do evil and yet prosper. "No," said Enoch, "that is not man's true aim. Evil cannot prosper ; it is doomed to defeat. For God has *not* abandoned the world He made. He has *not* left us to ourselves, to walk after the desire of our own eyes, and to clutch at all that a strong hand can grasp. He *will* interpose to assert his law, to punish all who love and serve evil, and to reward all who love and pursue that which is good." And so, holding fast to the promise made to his father and the father of us all, it grew to larger proportions in his mind, and took a more definite and practical form.

(3) How definite and practical it grew to be, while yet it remained substantially the same, we may learn from his *preaching* as reported by St. Jude. Speaking as a prophet, Enoch simply adapted his ruling and abiding convictions to the moral conditions and needs of his hearers. "The wickedness of man was," then, "great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil, and that continually." "The earth was corrupt before God, and full of violence." In such terms as these the ancient historian describes the world which was swept away by the Flood. And that the world of Enoch's day was little better we gather from St. Jude's brief description of

its ungodliness, its lawless deeds, its hard speeches against God. To men who were carried away from righteousness and peace in this overflowing tide of inveterate infidelity and flagrant immorality, it was impossible that the Gospel of Enoch should be presented in any form of grace. Of necessity it clothed itself in the severities of warning and rebuke. He still proclaimed God as the true Ruler and the Rewarder of men, indeed; but he warned them that God would prove Himself their Ruler by coming to be their Judge; by appearing to "execute justice on all," to "convict the ungodly of their ungodly deeds," and to reward every man according to his due. Lost to grace, they stood exposed to punishment; and the punishment due to their sins would not and could not fail to be inflicted on them, since offence breeds punishment by an inevitable law. If saved at all, they could only be saved by the swift consuming fire of Divine Justice and Wrath.

Yet, even so, the merciful purpose of Him in whom mercy rejoices over judgment, and whose very justice is but the severer form of his love, is not forgotten. When He came to convict the thousands of the ungodly, He would bring with Him "ten thousands of holy ones" who had been true to Him, when others fell away. Even then, evil was not to overcome good. Even then, good was to win its promised victory over evil. The world, the universe, should yet be purged from its stains, to become the heritage of the pardoned and the pure.

(4) But, of course, it is in the *life* of Enoch that his Gospel takes on its fairest and most inviting form. For here we see, as the men of his age might have seen, that faith in God and the word of God may keep a man pure and good even in an evil and unbelieving world; and move him to pity and to labour, with prophetic zeal, for the reclamation of the most wicked and corrupt. While in the translation, in which his life culminated, we see that such

a man, however evil the time on which he has fallen, may overcome the world by faith, win the manifest favour and approval of God, and thus bear witness that God is in very deed the real Ruler of men and the Rewarder of all who seek Him. In fine, this saintly life, with God's seal visibly impressed upon it, gathers up into one supreme illustration all of truth that Enoch had received by tradition from his fathers, all that he believed for himself—the whole contents of his creed, and all that he preached or prophesied to men.

Taken thus, in its simplicity and completeness, we can hardly escape the reflection that Enoch's Gospel is the very Gospel which *we* should live and preach. For our age, like his, is an age in which unbelief is rife, and a violent self-assertion, and an undue absorption in the pursuit of self-gratification and of gain. It would but shew a monstrous ingratitude to the Divine Ruler of men, and to the effects of his Providence and Grace, were we to affirm that the world is now as full of corruption and violence as it was when the pure light of Enoch's life shone upon it in vain. But, on the other hand, it would be simply to ignore facts which are brought home to us by every day's reading and experience, were we to deny that all the elements of the ungodliness which once destroyed the world, and has often since then destroyed this or that kingdom of the world, are still to be found among us. An age in which public injustice is still done in the name of Religion, and greed of empire hides itself, or scarcely condescends to hide itself, under the cloak of Patriotism; an age in which under the plea of "Art for Art's sake," painters and poets parade the indecency and lubricity which were once accounted a shame and an offence; an age in which men are so selfish and eager for gain that they will rob their neighbours by the rules of the Market and the Stock Exchange; an age in which men of science gravely argue against the fundamental verities of the



Christian Faith, and philosophers lower the tone of public morality by avowing that they recognise no sanctity in the law of marriage, and some of our journalists and novelists, who make a noise in the world wholly disproportioned to their number and importance, expend themselves in paltry sneers, or vulgar jests, or crafty insinuations against all that was once held to be true and pure,—can hardly escape the charge of ungodliness. And we shall best serve such an age as this, we can only keep ourselves unspotted in such a world as this, by being true to the convictions by which Enoch was sustained:—the conviction that evil cannot prosper in the end, however strong and prosperous it may look for a time, but must be punished and destroyed; the conviction that God *is*, even though we can no more prove his existence than we can prove our own; the conviction that He is the true Ruler of men, that the world is his world, and that his will must and will be done in it; the conviction that He will come to judge the world, and to reward every man according to his deeds, whether they be good or whether they be bad.

S. Cox.

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ESAU AND JACOB.

(GENESIS xxv. 27–34).

THE names of these brothers are familiar as household words; but their history, copious as it is in parts, leaves not a little for the student of character to supply by inference and comparison. The broad facts are there: the outline, as it were, is clearly traced, but it has been filled in hastily and inconsiderately by interpreters; and the current estimate formed of the pair is far from accurate, while much of the moral has been missed.