

smite the Ass, may I crush the evil one, may I destroy Apep in his hour.'

The subject, however, of the Egyptian theories of punishment is one the consideration of which may be reserved for a future time. One chapter, the cxxvth, which contains the famous negative confession, must not be passed unnoticed, as it is here given very fully. It is a remarkable code of ethics, and must be compared with that which ruled such codes of morals as the maxims of Phtah-hotep and Ani.

To quote some of the denials: 'I have not done iniquity; I have not stolen; I have done no murder; I have done no harm; I have spoken no lies; I have caused no pain; I have not set my lips in motion against any man; I have not defiled the wife of any man; I have not cursed God; I have not cursed the king.' All these indicate principles very similar to those of the Mosaic Decalogue, but the negative confession is not all equally admirable. The material interests of the temple and the priesthood are too prominent. 'I have not defrauded the offerings; I have not minished the oblations; I have not plundered the God; I have not defrauded the offerings of the gods, or plundered the offerings of the blessed dead; I have not filched the food of the infant, neither have I sinned against the God

of my native town; I have not slaughtered with evil intent the cattle of the God.' Although there are these traces of priestly cupidity, the code contains all our morality in a germ, and with refinements of delicacy often lacking among later and more advanced people. This remarkable confession of faith is very ancient, and it is probably, like the Pyramid Texts, the product of the Heliopolitan school of priest scribes. Little need be said now as to the immense importance of this work, and it indeed places Egyptian eschatology in an entirely new light, and supplies us with material for the comparative study of so important a subject totally unexpected. There remains, however, one subject to be mentioned,—the excellence of the translation, not only of the papyrus of Ani but of the large number of texts from all sources embodied in the work. In this work not only has Dr. E. A. W. Budge shown his great knowledge of the Egyptian language, but also his great care in avoiding the use of words which might convey in the least degree a false philological or theological idea. The work has taken many years to produce and entailed great cost, but it is no exaggeration to say that in it we have one of the finest works ever produced in connexion with the great and important science of Egyptology.

## 'What shall I do, Lord?'

*Being the General Assembly's Annual Temperance Sermon, preached in Free St. George's Church, Edinburgh, during the Sitting of the General Assembly, 1895.*

BY THE EDITOR.

'And I said, What shall I do, Lord?'—Acts xxii. 10.

'WHAT shall I do, Lord?' That question touches the very heart of Christianity. If it were ever possible to give a definition of anything by means of a question, that question might be given as a sound and sufficient definition of Christianity. 'What shall I do, Lord?'—that is the religion of Christ in its simplest and completest form.

But we must take it all. 'What shall I do?' is not Christianity, nor indeed any religion at all. 'What shall I do?' is simple morality. And even Matthew Arnold recognised that morality is not religion. Religion, he said, is morality touched

by something. What, then, is that something which, touching it, turns morality into religion? It is emotion, said Matthew Arnold. 'Religion,' he said, 'is morality touched by emotion.' And as soon as he had said it, the sentence leaped into fame. But it will not do. Warm up morality with feeling till it reaches fever heat, and it is 'mere morality' still. To become religion, our common conduct must be touched by something from without, not simply heated from within. The spark of fire must descend from heaven; it cannot be created by hard rubbing. Religion is not

morality touched by emotion; it is morality touched by God. 'What shall I do, *Lord?*'—that is religion, and there is no religion short of that.

So when we say that this question, 'What shall I do, *Lord?*' might stand as a definition of Christianity, we do not mean to say that Christianity is all conduct and no creed. 'What shall I do?'—that is conduct, but that is not Christianity. 'What shall I do, *Lord?*'—that is Christianity, and that is conduct and creed together.

And the creed comes first. Even Saul of Tarsus acknowledged in his heart that Jesus was *Lord* before he asked the question, 'What shall I do?' No doubt the recognition was very swift. In his case it could not have been otherwise. But it was absolutely necessary that he should say '*Lord*' before he said 'What shall I do?' Until that moment he had been doing, and doing abundantly, filling his morality with an 'emotion' that might well have turned it into religion, if it could ever be made religion that way. He had had much success in his doing. But those things which were gain to him were loss to Christ. Now he has called Jesus '*Lord*, to the glory of God the Father,' and henceforth he will be blessed for ever in his deed.

When the rich young ruler came running to Jesus, and knelt before Him, he asked, 'Good Master, what shall I do?' Jesus stopped him there. He will answer 'What shall I do?' in a moment. But, first, is the 'Good Master' right? Does he acknowledge God in his heart, and will his conduct be a religious life to him? He had had enough of 'What shall I do?' already, enough of morality untouched by God. Does the 'Good Master' mean surrender? Does it mean Lordship now? Nay, Goodness is God. Does the 'Good Master' mean that he is ready to acknowledge Jesus as *Lord* and *God*, and whatsoever He says unto him, is he ready now to do it?

Well, *we* at least are ready. We have echoed the disciple's glad cry of recognition, 'My *Lord* and my *God*.' We have actually called Jesus *Lord* to the glory of God the Father. And now we earnestly ask of Him, 'What wilt Thou have me to do?'

Now the answer of Jesus to the question, 'What shall I do?' is not so simple, and it is not so immediate as we sometimes think. As long as He was upon the earth we can imagine His

disciples going to Him at every turn in their affairs, and getting immediate and very plain direction how to act. But we can also imagine that it was not the highest training for them. We know that if man is to reach the perfection of character he was made for, he must have his own senses exercised to discern good and evil. So, for the disciples' sake it was expedient that Jesus should go away.

And He has no sooner gone than we see that the former childlike training is superseded. It is but a few months since the Ascension when Saul of Tarsus puts his question, 'What shall I do, *Lord?*' But he does not receive an immediate answer. 'Arise,' it is said to him, 'and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.' And even such guidance as this is fitful now and temporary. Throughout the next few years St. Paul does receive an occasional surprisingly explicit direction how to act,—the most memorable, perhaps, occurring at the commencement of his second missionary journey, when he essayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus suffered him not. But it is only occasional, and it is only temporary. Then this guidance ceases for ever.

And now we are dependent for direction upon the Holy Spirit and the written word. I say that now, when we put the question, 'What shall I do, *Lord?*' the answer comes through the application of the word of God to our hearts and consciences by the Holy Spirit. We are not worse off than when Jesus was here. We are not left orphans. In place of Jesus' bodily presence we have these two, the written word, which may be passed from hand to hand, and from land to land, and the Holy Spirit always ready to make the word available in our lives.

Suppose, then, that we who have called Jesus '*Lord*' are brought face to face with the great perplexity, how to deal with strong drink. The perplexity is whether we ought to abstain from it. For there is no perplexity in the mind of any follower of the *Lord* Jesus Christ whether he ought to be temperate in the use of it. We go to Jesus: 'What shall I do, *Lord?*' Our answer comes through the word of God; and it is made ours, it is made intelligible to us, it is made credible and irresistible for us by the action of the Holy Spirit applying it to our hearts.

For the Holy Spirit does not originate anything

Himself. 'He shall not speak from Himself,' said our Lord; 'but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak.' He directs our mind to the word, or calls it to our recollection. He makes it intelligible to our understanding. He brings it into touch with our emotions and our will. He gives us the opportunity of so looking at it and so deciding upon it, that we deliberately make our own choice whether we shall abstain or not. But the word is there first. The word is there first, and we must find it.

Now, when we turn to the word of God to find our answer it seems to leap to our hand in a moment. 'Jesus Himself was not an abstainer, and I will follow His example.' But that answer will not do. It is true that by his enemies Jesus was called a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, and if it seems to anyone that that or his turning the water into wine proves that He was not an abstainer, I am not concerned to deny it. For Jesus is not an example in that way. To the disciples who followed Him through the villages of Galilee He *was* an example in that way. And I have no doubt that they dressed as He dressed, and ate as He ate, and drank as He drank. But it is impossible that that can be expected of us. For it is impossible that it can ever be done by us. We do not even know what He ate. If we did, we should almost certainly find that we could not follow Him in eating it. We do know how He dressed. We know, for example, that He went barefoot or wore sandals. And we know that it would be the insanity of suicide if we were to follow His example. So we may think we can prove that Jesus drank wine, and we may find it pleasant to drink wine also, but we cannot assume Christ's authority for it, or claim that we are following His example.

When we turn to the word of God for the answer to our question, 'What shall I do, Lord?' it is not in the surroundings of Jesus' daily life that we shall find it. If our Lord had been the shortsighted reformer that Mohammed was, He would have stereotyped His example for all time to come. He would have attempted to leave instructions to men how to act in every event of life through all ages and in all lands. I say Mohammed did so. And now? I found the following in the *New York Evangelist* of last week. It is written by one of the most distinguished scholars of America, Professor Henry Preserved Smith, who

spent last winter in Egypt studying Arabic. 'My Arabic teacher,' he says, 'is a religious man. Indeed religion is the great interest of his life. His smallest actions are conformed to the divine law as he conceives it. If he has a precept of the Koran, he goes by that. Failing that, he does what Mohammed was accustomed to do, or is said to have done, in a similar case. Where he has not this light, he argues from the analogy of the Koran or of the traditions. He regulates the very cut of his beard by the example of the Prophet. This is, in fact, his conception of religion, a divinely given set of rules for daily life. The only questions he has asked me about the Christian religion have been about what is allowed and what is forbidden.'

This Arabic teacher is a man after Mohammed's own heart. That is just what he wanted his followers to be. That is just what he tried to do for them. But the method of the Lord Jesus Christ is as far removed from that as the East is from the West. He did not commend His example to His followers for all time, or leave instructions how they must eat and drink and wherewithal they ought to be clothed. And so our memory is not loaded with trifles of endless and irritating detail; our sense is not shocked with the daily sight of customs long since dead that yet must be galvanised into ghastly life; our progress is not hindered by a religious conservatism which damns everything that the first century did not discover. 'I need not add,' says Professor Smith, 'that my teacher is a conservative of the conservatives. The Arabic grammar, which was the first book he read with me, was written five hundred years ago. His authority in theology is doubtless Ghazzali, whose work was done at the close of our eleventh century. Since that time, science, as he views it, has made no advance, and the study of the present day is the apprehension of literary works, five hundred, eight hundred, or a thousand years old.'

And yet Jesus looked forward into the future and legislated for the circumstances of all time coming with a minuteness and a sweep which it never entered into the heart of Mohammed to conceive. Far bolder and grander in conception than Mohammed, He simply gave his followers majestic principles under which must come every duty and every perplexity that ever could arise; and then He sent the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, to bring the duty within the light of the principle, and

leave us clear to make our own choice whether we will do it or not.

Did I say 'principles?' No, there is but one. 'If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.' There is no question of life or conduct that can arise but it will fall within the lines of that great principle. It is by the persistent application of that principle to the conscience of Christian men and women that progress has been made throughout the ages in the arts of civilisation and the graces of humanity. For I would have you to observe that it is Christianity—I mean earnest, evangelical Christianity—that has led the way in every civilising and humanising gain that these centuries have gathered. It is true that when slavery rose to be a burning question in America, men of Belial quoted the words and the example of our Lord and His apostles on the other side, and even some of those who named the name of Christ were perplexed that they could find no explicit condemnation of the evil in the word of God. Nevertheless it was Christianity that swept slavery away. For, as soon as the question arose, the Spirit of God brought it within the grasp of this principle of self-denial for Christ's sake and the brethren's, and men who were asking honestly, 'What shall I do, Lord?' saw immediately where their duty lay.

The question of slavery is settled. It is the question of abstinence from strong drink that is before us now. And is it not abundantly manifest already that the battle is set in array on precisely similar lines, the same forces being found on either side? The late Dr. Taylor of New York used to tell a shrewd story of a Japanese student who read the words 'Temperance Union' over the gate of the Y.M.C.A. in the capital of Japan; and when he had learned the meaning of the words and the objects of the institution, 'but I have not got to the bottom of this yet,' he said; 'there is certainly something beneath all this; this is only an effect, and it must be due to a cause that is stronger than itself.' And he discovered, of course, that Christ was behind it, and the great principle which He had laid down for all His followers—'If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself.'

But some of us are still troubled with the application of it. Although St. Paul declared that it is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby our brother stumbleth; yet

because he recommended that Timothy should take a little wine for his stomach's sake and his often infirmities, they are puzzled to know on which side in this battle St. Paul is to be found. And because Jesus was called a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, or because He turned the water into wine at Cana, they are not sure if He is with the total abstainers after all.

No doubt, if Jesus had simply said, 'If any man would be My disciple, let him drink no wine or strong drink,' it would have been an easy solution of the perplexity to-day. But it might have been perplexity beyond all endurance to the next generation, when this question will be settled. And it would not have been Jesus, but the human and shortsighted Mohammed. What Jesus did was to lay down the principle, and then to live under it Himself according to the circumstances of His own day.

Now in His day this was not a burning question. It was not a question at all. No doubt men occasionally drank too much wine, as they occasionally ate too much food. And it is interesting to observe how often the drunkard and the glutton are condemned together. What we call in the mildness of our language the *craving* for strong drink was practically unknown. It had not been classed as a disease; it was not arisen to the dimensions of a national cry that reached to heaven.

The question in Jesus' day was indeed the very opposite of this. It was the question of self-denial for its own sake. Innumerable persons had arisen who said that simply to deny oneself was acceptable in the sight of God, and the more excruciating the self-denial the more acceptable. Whole sects had sprung into life fed on this false principle, and as their intolerable self-denial carried them away, ever new recruits were found to fill the broken ranks. It was the perversion of a great law of life, and the greater the principle the more it was possible to pervert it. Jesus announced the principle: 'If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself.' But he set his face against the perversion of it. Self-denial, he said, is of no value for its own sake, it is the lading of men with burdens heavier than they can bear. And He did not go out into the wilderness to live on locusts and wild honey; still less did He join the company of the grovelling Essenes by the shores of the Dead Sea; but He came eating and

drinking, and clothed Himself in the common garb of the day.

Yet there never was anyone who fulfilled Christ's royal law of life as He Himself fulfilled it. His enemies cast it at Him as a reproach that He ate and drank with publicans and sinners. And now even His own followers give it as a reason why they should not deny themselves strong drink for the brethren's sake. But it was in the very fulfilment of His great principle that He did it. For in His day the self-denial was in eating and drinking; it had actually become a kind of indulgence to abstain from it. A *kind* of indulgence? It had become a most real and delicious form of spiritual pride. For in this way it was possible to separate oneself from the common crowd, and enjoy the distinction of superior sanctity here, and the certainty of eternal life hereafter. To eat and drink with publicans and sinners was an act of moral heroism on the part of Jesus, which we but faintly reflect to-day when for the brethren's sake we deliberately deny ourselves the social pleasures that gather around the use of wine. We feel the taunt when they tell us that we are unsociable and extreme. Did Jesus not feel it when they said, 'Gluttonous man and wine-bibber'? We shrink, I dare to say, from the companionship into which an ardent, active life of abstinence sometimes throws us. Did Jesus never shrink from the necessity that made Him the daily companion of publicans and sinners? How much easier it would have been for Him to have followed John the Baptist into the wilderness. But He came not to do His own will. And there was no occasion in which He failed to carry out the principle He laid down for His followers that they must deny themselves, even though it should be to the carrying of a cross every day.

One of the most interesting of these occasions is told by St. John near the beginning of his Gospel. Jesus was invited to a wedding at Cana of Galilee. He went to it. During the feast it was found that the wine had gone done. His mother comes to Him. If anyone can relieve them of this embarrassment, it is He. But it is very hard for Him to do it. For there is no way but by working a miracle, and that means that the hour of public recognition with all its disappointments and all its pains will be sprung upon Him immediately. We cannot realise the intensity of His desire that that hour might not come. But there is the trouble at

the wedding, His mother's anxiety, and the bridegroom's shame before all the guests. So He turns the water into wine. In the fulfilment of that principle of denying self that others might be blessed, He turns the water at that table into wine. Brethren, I put it to you whether there is any clearer way of following His example to-day than by turning the wine at our tables into water.

'If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself.' It is evident that our Lord contemplates something that it is difficult to do; for He adds, 'and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.' Now no one can pretend that it is difficult to be a moderate drinker. I grant you that it is difficult enough to continue to be one. But what I mean is that to begin to be a moderate drinker in the present state of social feeling involves no effort or act of self-denial. It is sometimes said that it will soon demand more courage to drink wine than to abstain from it. It may be so. I would the time were come. But at present the moderate drinker has still companionship enough to deliver him from all fear. If he is a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ he cannot say that his moderate drinking is any evidence of it; for it involves as yet no self-denial, and carries with it no cross.

But not only is moderate drinking no evidence for Christianity, so far as it goes it is even a direct evidence against it. At present it is so. I do not say what it may be in the next generation. We have not to apply Christ's great rule of life to the next generation. In this day and generation it tells, so far as it goes, against a man's claim to be living the life in Christ, that he is still content to be called a moderate drinker.

For the evidence of the life in Christ is self-denial. Now, self-denial is not in seeking things that are simply difficult to do, and then doing them because they are difficult. Self-denial for its own sake has no beatitude attached to it. The occasions for self-denial are found, where our Lord Himself found them, in the daily task of living. He ate and drank with publicans and sinners, though His soul shrank from it. For the brother's cry in His day was against the false pharisaic pride that reared a religious wall of separation between brother and brother, and drove the sinner into deeper sin. But now there is no brother's cry so swift and piercing as it passes us on its way to heaven as the cry of the drunkard and his children. Need I add that there is no force that will quench

that cry but the force of public opinion? And who makes the public opinion that will quench it? Not the moderate drinker. Indeed, it cannot be said that any moderate person of any kind has ever done much good in this world. It is the men who have been 'beside themselves,' beginning with Jesus of Nazareth, who have left a legacy of blessing behind them. So if we would arrest that cry before it enters the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, we must cast in our lot with those who are known as total abstainers, however difficult the deed may be.

We must, I say. For I speak to those who have called Jesus 'Lord.' The others will say, 'On what compulsion must I?' and I have no answer to give to them. But if *you* say so, then I can answer readily. You have called Jesus 'Lord, to the glory of God the Father,' and then you have asked the question, 'What shall I do?' The answer was found most readily in the magnificent and imperishable rule of life: 'If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself.' Then followed the immediate application. And we found it in the daily cry that rises from hovels that once were homes, the cry of starved children and naked wives. And when we have found it there, we who call Jesus 'Lord' know that we dare not pass it by. Jesus is not as Mohammed. He lays down no petty rules for mechanical obedience, the

obedience of a starved intellect and a childish will. But let His followers once see what He would have them do, and His will becomes theirs with a rush of loyalty which never startled the heart of a Mohammedan.

And He stands in our way Himself, a pleading, earnest presence that will not be put by. 'I will not leave you orphans,' He said; 'I will come to you.' But to whom did He say it? Do you think He said it to some new aristocracy of Christianity that eats and drinks certainly, but not with publicans and sinners? Do you think He said it to some new aristocracy of Christianity that eats and drinks and then goes up into the temple to pray: 'God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, for I know when to stop'? I could more easily believe that He is with the publicans and sinners themselves again.

But I will tell you with whom He is found. He is found with the fatherless children, whose father is yet alive, but dead to all the joy and the mercy of fatherhood. He is found as the husband of the widow, whose husband is yet alive, but who cries out in the anguish of his soul and prays that he were dead. He is found with those through whom He makes Himself known as the widow's help and the orphan's stay, and to whom He is waiting to say, 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, ye did it unto Me.'

## The Great Text Commentary.

### THE GREAT TEXTS OF II. CORINTHIANS.

2 COR. xiii. 14.

'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all' (R.V.).

#### EXPOSITION.

It is not without a special significance that the Epistle which has been, almost to the very close, the most agitated and stormy of all that came from St. Paul's pen, should end with a benediction which, as being fuller than any other found in the New Testament, was adopted from a very early period in the liturgies of many Eastern churches, such as Antioch, Cæsarea, and Jerusalem.—PLUMPTRE.

'*The grace.*'—Grace belongs to the Father, but is here ascribed especially to Christ, because through Him God's love manifested, and still manifests, itself in the form of unmerited favour towards men, and most signally in Christ's great act of grace or power (2 Cor. viii. 9); also because Christ is Himself 'full of grace,' and 'out of His fulness' believers 'receive grace for grace' (John i. 14, 16). His grace *with us* implies conscious enjoyment of His gifts and riches (2 Cor. viii. 9), and growth to His likeness.—WAITE.

'*The Lord Jesus Christ.*'—The order of the names of the three divine persons is itself significant. Commonly, the name of the Father precedes that of the Son, as, *e.g.*, in chap. i. 2; Rom.