IT seemed to us an astonishing thing, and we expressed our astonishment, that whereas Dr. Salmond’s Christian Doctrine of Immortality had taken its place as the standard work on the subject of the life to come, and many capable reviews in agreement with its conclusions had appeared, not one of the leaders of thought in opposition to it, whether from the side of Universalism or of Conditional Immortality, had spoken an audible word. We did not mean to say, and we did not say, that they had not replied because they could not. We simply said that they had not replied. But we cannot say so now. In the ninth issue of The Faith Quarterly, which is dated ‘Spring 1896,’ there is a review of Dr. Salmond’s book which occupies twenty very large pages, and is written by a foeman who is worthy of any man’s steel—Mr. F. A. Freer of Bristol.

Mr. Freer reviews Dr. Salmond’s book from the side of Conditional Immortality. If others have an answer, he leaves them alone that they may give it. He is concerned only with the fact that ‘Dr. Salmond maintains the traditional position, which is based upon a conviction of the inherent immortality of man,’ and he seeks to answer that. He feels that some answer ‘from the standpoint that we occupy’ is the more necessary, because ‘the work as a whole is so moderate, even judicial, in its tone, and it bears evidence of so much care, learning, and devout feeling, that it is likely to have great influence among thinking men.’

Now it had better be said at once that not only is Mr. Freer’s article able and sincere, but it never swerves from the right path of controversial magnanimity. And this is the more admirable since (this also had better be said and done with), if there is a place where Dr. Salmond for one moment falls below his judicial tone, it is in the second part of his sixth ‘book,’ where he deals with the ‘Doctrines of Annihilation and Conditional Immortality.’ Mr. Freer says plainly that Dr. Salmond’s treatment of the doctrine of Conditional Immortality is an exception to his generally impartial and judicial manner, for ‘against this the author betrays a certain animus, endeavouring to crush it under a load of adjectives, negative and positive: inadequate, unsatisfactory, inglorious, incongruous, inconsistent, unreasonable, intolerable, faulty, mistaken, wretched, cowardly.’ But he says that in a sentence, and it is over.

In the very beginning of his article Mr. Freer lays bare what seems to him the prevailing ‘vice’ of Dr. Salmond’s volume, and in doing so reveals his own position. Mr. Freer believes that man is
not inherently immortal, but may attain to life and immortality by exercising faith in Jesus Christ. Dr. Salmond holds that man was made at the first with an incorruptible, imperishable life. Thus they part at the very beginning, and, as Mr. Freer sees clearly, they cannot possibly come together again. Dr. Salmond points out that man was made in the image of God, which the brutes were not. He is more, therefore, than the beasts that perish. Mr. Freer admits that he is more, but only inasmuch as he has the capacity and the opportunity for more. If he accepts the offer of eternal life (which carries immortality with it), he will live for ever. If he does not, he will perish even as those creatures to whom the offer was never made.

There is one important respect, however, in which Dr. Salmond and Mr. Freer agree. They both admit that the question must be settled by the teaching of the New Testament. Whereupon Mr. Freer seems to make a point when he says that Dr. Salmond's first objections are irrelevant, being based on sentiment instead of Scripture. The first objection is that annihilation 'has history against it.' From the beginning men have clung to some existence after death. And 'it is not the higher and more civilized races alone who feel the idea of annihilation intolerable.' The second objection is given in Dr. Salmond's own words: 'It has against it the whole force of those ineradicable sentiments, quenchless convictions, profound cravings, large previsions, and persistent reasonings which have made it natural for man, as history shows, in all the ages and in every part of the world, to overleap in thought the incident of death and anticipate a hereafter.' To both objections Mr. Freer has one reply. They are based on sentiment and not on the Word of God. And he partly turns the edge even of the sentiment when he adds that the 'possibility—nay, the certainty—of a hereafter for man is at least as fully admitted and as forcibly declared by Conditionalists as by those of any other persuasion.' For survival is not necessarily eternal, and a hereafter is not necessarily an immortality.

Now when we come to the New Testament, if we were indifferent about the matter we might lightly say with Gallio that it is only a question of words and names. For Mr. Freer shows very plainly that it depends greatly upon whether a literal or an ethical meaning is discovered in the biblical words for Life and Death. There are texts, of course; but that text is yours and this is mine. It cannot be settled by texts. It can only be settled as such matters have been settled before, by impartial painstaking scholarship, which determines at last beyond all controversy whether when St. Paul said Jesus brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel, he spoke of quantity or of quality, of timeless duration or of ethical enjoyment.

The Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol believes that when St. Paul said Jesus brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel he meant quantity, not quality. Last Easter Day Dr. Ellicott preached a sermon on this very text (2 Tim. i. 10). As an accurate New Testament scholar, he prefers the rendering 'life and incorruption' of the Revised Version to the more familiar 'life and immortality' of the Authorized. But he does not think the difference between them is momentous; 'for' he says, 'whether we take one form of words or the other, the broad truth of the passage remains the same—that it was the Saviour of the world, and He alone, who brought into clear light the certain and consolatory truth that our personal existence does not terminate in death, and that our future heritage is life and incorruption.'

Is the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol an annihilationist then? No; by no means. For you observe that up to this point all he says is that Jesus brought this life and immortality into clear light. He does not say that Jesus and He
alone made life and incorruption possible; he
only says He made them visible.

And yet it shows the real difficulty of this
subject, that before the sermon is ended Dr.
Ellicott seems to cast this restriction away, and
actually make life and incorruption dependent
upon union with Christ by faith. ‘The vital
truth,’ he says (and the italics are always his
own), ‘which this most blessed Easter Day
brings home to every believing heart is that it
is on union with Christ that life and incorrup-
tion absolutely depend, and that apart from Him
man may live, but it will be the shadowy life of
Sheol, waiting—joyless—waiting for the issues of
the future, but in doubt as to what that future
is really to be.’ And then, as if to make this
meaning the only possible and unmistakable one,
he adds: ‘In a word, then, it is on real union
with Christ that the life and incorruption which He
brought to light, alone can be vouchsafed to us.’

This slab of black syenite was not Merenptah’s
own. It belonged to Amenhotep III., a king who
had lived and reigned about two hundred years
before. ‘It stood 10 feet 3 inches high and 5 feet
4 inches wide, while its thickness of 13 inches of such
a tough material prevented its suffering from a mere
fall. It is the largest stele of igneous rock known,
and was polished like glass on its exquisitely flat
faces.’ This noble block had been used by
Amenhotep III. to contain the story of his religious
benefactions, and he had placed it prominently in
his funereal temple. But when Merenptah came
to the throne and found that he had to build a
temple and drive out the Libyans together, he
prudently resolved to dig down this fine temple
which belonged to his predecessor Amenhotep and
use its materials for his own. He placed the fine
block of syenite in one of his walls, turning its
face inwards; and on its polished back he inscribed
the story of his great victory over the Libyans.
That block has been unearthed this winter; its
polished back has been read; and in one of the
lines of its inscription has been found the first
unmistakable mention in Egypt of the people of
Israel.

Professor Flinders Petrie tells the story in the
Contemporary Review for May. He also gives a
translation of the whole inscription, as it has
been rendered into very intelligible English by
Mr. Griffith of the British Museum. The words
we are interested in occur within a line or two of
the end. After disposing of the Libyan invaders,
and graphically describing the abject despondency
that his victories caused in their cities and villages, Merenptah refers briefly to other nations he has vanquished. "Vanquished are the Tahennu; the Khita are quieted; ravaged is Pa-kanana with all Yenu of the Syrians is made as though it had not violence; taken is Askadni; seized is Kazmel; existed; the People of Ysiraal is spoiled, it hath no seed; Syria has become as widows of the land of Egypt; all lands together are in peace. Everyone that was a marauder hath been subdued by the king Merenptah, who gives life like the sun every day."

Thus the inscription ends. The clause we have printed in italics is not so inscribed by Merenptah, who did not know that its almost accidental mention would do more to make him famous than all the victories this stolen slab records. It is printed in italics because it undoubtedly refer to that nation which (as we suppose) was despised and rejected by Merenptah, but is the object of deepest interest to us. Yet to what stage of the history of that nation it refers, it is very hard to say. Indeed, this accidental and trifling discovery has opened a very large and serious historical problem.

For if Merenptah was the Pharaoh of the Exodus, how is he able to speak of conquering the Children of Israel in Palestine in the beginning of his reign? If he was earlier than the Exodus, that difficulty is only increased. While if he was later, and if the Children of Israel were already established in Palestine when Merenptah came to the throne, how is it that no mention is made in the Bible of this invasion of Palestine by the Egyptian king? And it is not Merenptah's campaign only we should expect to be mentioned there. How is it that there is no record of the invasion of Rameses II, who was before him, or of Rameses III, who came after?

Professor Flinders Petrie is much puzzled about these things. He offers five separate hypotheses. They are all possible, but they are not all equally probable. And he himself inclines to the opinion that the Israelites did not enter Canaan till after the last invasion under Rameses III. This, of course, will not agree with the received chronology, for it leaves too little room for the period of the Judges. But Professor Flinders Petrie thinks that the history of the Judges should be separated into three strands of north, west, and east. The services and deliverances were going on at once in three different localities, but the historian could not tell them all at once, and it is we that have caught the impression that they followed one after another in a long succession.

But if the Children of Israel did not reach Canaan till after Merenptah's day, how could Merenptah subdue them there? There are several possible answers. But again Professor Flinders Petrie inclines to the belief that a split had occurred in Goshen, and part of the Israelites had returned to Canaan long ere the Exodus took place. Such a disruption, he thinks, was almost inevitable in so stiffnecked a race of men. But he frankly admits that the evidence is not at hand. He freely allows you to make any likelier suggestion you may discover.

The liveliest article in the new number of the Presbyterian and Reformed Review is an article by Principal Brown of Aberdeen. Yet Principal Brown is running through the nineties, and the subject of the article is the well-worn one of the Revised Version.

Principal Brown, as we all know, was a member of the New Testament Company of Revisers. And he admits that in condemning the Revision, as in one respect he heartily does, he 'more or less' condemns himself. But he thinks that it has been for general use 'an utter failure,' and he thinks he knows the reason why. More than that, he is able, with evident justification, to say, 'I told you so.' He accordingly lets himself go for once, tells us right out that the English of the Revision is fifth-form English, as Dr. Field of
Norwich called it, and washes his hands of responsibility by saying that he warned the Company that the public would never take to it, 'and we now know who was right.'

Dr. Brown says that when 'the itch of change (if I may so speak) took possession of the Company,' he was at first infected by it. But as the work went on, he was one of those who saw that the changes which were being made were not only far too many, but, 'out of a desire to squeeze out the last shred of sense, were destroying the purity of the English, and all hope of our Version being accepted by the public.'

By a curious coincidence, along with the number of the Presbyterian and Reformed Review containing Dr. Brown's lively article, there arrived the current number of the Contemporary. Now the Contemporary for May also contains an article on the Revised Version. It is as lively an article as Dr. Brown's. For it is written by Mr. H. W. Horwill of Exeter. But so flatly do the two articles contradict one another, that you would guess, till you noticed the dates, the one had been written to demolish all that the other had laboured to build.

Dr. Brown agrees with the late Dr. Field that the English of the Revised New Testament is 'fifth-form English,' and to its unrhythmical language he attributes the utterness of its failure. Its cardinal fault in Dr. Brown's estimation is that it has introduced so many changes. 'Its cardinal fault,' says Mr. Horwill, 'is that it has made too few changes, not too many; that it has left undone the things that it ought to have done, not that it has done the things that it ought not to have done.' And as for the superiority of the Authorized Version on the ground of the 'supposed excellence of its rhythm,'—'I believe,' says Mr. Horwill, 'that on the whole the rhythm of the Authorized Version is not superior to that of the Revised, but only more familiar.' Then he quotes from the third volume of The Expository Times the opinion there expressed by Mr. C. A. Vince that 'we are in the habit of regarding the prose of the Authorized New Testament as rhythmical, chiefly because we are so familiar with it that in reading it we dispose the accents easily, without the hesitation and pains with which we read the unfamiliar prose.'

'And after all,' continues Mr. Horwill, 'what does this question of rhythm come to when everything is said? What is actually meant when it is contended that one version is more rhythmical than another? In plain English, that it sounds better! It is more impressive from the reading-desk! No matter though earnest believers, whose supreme interest in life is to know the will of God that they may do it, are baffled again and again by words and phrases without meaning, and that a thousand helpful spiritual suggestions escape them through faulty renderings, let everything be sacrificed that their ears may be ravished by the majesty of "that blessed word Mesopotamia"!'

Mr. Horwill does not believe the Bible was meant to be rhythmical. He has been reading the 'Letters of Paul' in the original, and he has not been struck with the excellence of their rhythm. He thinks the very choice of Paul as a writer shows that rhythm was meant to occupy a very subordinate place. So far as style has to do with the Bible at all, he believes that just one consideration weighed with the writers, or with the Spirit that was in them, that it should be thoroughly and easily 'understanded of the people.'

And so this is the fault he finds with the Revised Version. It may be accurate, but it is unintelligible. It contains such utterly obsolete words as 'firmament' (Gen. i. 6), 'daysman' (Job ix. 33), 'bruit' (Nah. iii. 19), 'divers' (Matt. iv. 24), 'mete' (Matt. iii. 2), 'halt' (Matt. xviii. 8), 'husbandman' (Matt. xxi. 33). No doubt, as he says, these words can be explained, but they have no business to need explanation. And the case is much worse and the result much more mischievous when we pass from words which suggest no
meaning at all to those which suggest an erroneous one. Among these Mr. Horwill mentions ‘desire’ (2 Chron. xxi. 20), ‘prevent’ (Pss. xxii. 3 and cxix. 148), ‘fulfil’ (Matt. v. 17), ‘doctor’ (Luke ii. 46), ‘mansions’ (John xiv. 2), ‘consent’ (Acts vii. 1), ‘envious’ (Acts xiv. 1, 9), ‘quick’ (Acts x. 42), ‘quicken’ (Rom. viii. n and I Cor. xv. 36), ‘mortify’ (Rom. viii. 13 and Col. iii. 5), ‘con­strain’ (2 Cor. v. 14), ‘lust’ (1 John ii. 16).

What Mr. Horwill calls for, then, is a fuller revision, or a new translation altogether, every word of which shall be as intelligible to the ordinary English reader as the original was to the men for whom it was written. And Mr. Horwill has the courage of his convictions.

A bright and attractive weekly paper has just appeared under the title of Light and Leading. Mr. Horwill is its editor. It is intended to assist diligent students in their study of the Bible, but especially to aid Sunday-school teachers in preparation for their work. Now the second number of Light and Leading contains Notes on the International Lesson for the 3rd of May; and the very first note is a new translation.

The ‘lesson’ is Luke xvii. 5–19. This is the beginning of the New Translation:

And the messengers said to the Lord, ‘Give us faith also.’ But the Lord said, ‘If you had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, you would have said to this mulberry-tree, “Be uprooted and be planted in the sea,” and it would have obeyed you. But who of you, having a slave who comes in from the field, after ploughing or tending sheep, will say to him, “Come forward at once, and sit at table”? Will he not rather say to him, “Prepare my supper, and gird yourself to wait on me while I eat and drink, and afterwards you shall yourself eat and drink”? Does he thank the slave for doing what was commanded? In the same way, when you, too, have done all that was commanded, you say, “We are useless slaves: what it was our duty to do, we have done.”’

Now that is just as successful an effort at modernising and popularising the language of the Bible as we have ever seen. But Mr. Horwill must have learned already that it is easier to condemn the unintelligibility of our English versions than to remove it. Not to mention tending sheep, would ‘the lowest and most ignorant in our land’ understand what is meant by ‘gird yourself to wait on me’ without the necessity of explanation? And what is worse, as Mr. Horwill himself has properly told us, is the same idea conveyed to a modern as it was to an ordinary ancient ear by the word slave? In his Contemporary article, Mr. Horwill singles that word out as a case in which the Revised Version as well as the Authorized ‘is guilty of sheer mistranslation.’ ‘The rendering of δοῦλος by “servant” carries with it,’ he says, ‘the associations of some one who is paid regular wages, and can give a month’s notice or go out on strike.’ Now, even if we agree that on the whole the Revisers had been wiser if they had been bolder, it is doubtful if in this instance ‘slave’ would have been a better rendering than the ‘bond­servant’ that they adopt. No doubt δοῦλος means slave, and it means nothing else. But the question is this: Would ‘slave’ in English suggest the same thought to us as δοῦλος in Greek did to St. Paul’s readers? Doulos contains the idea of servitude as well as of service. To a Greek or a Roman, servitude overwhelms all other.

But we have dismissed Dr. Brown too summarily. His article is as full of matter as of vitality. Some of it has appeared already, either in our own pages or in the Expositor; but much of it is new, and it is all both interesting and instructive.

First of all, and chiefly, Dr. Brown gives some examples of changes which the Revisers made with his own hearty approval. The first is in Acts iv. 30. The Authorized Version reads: ‘Grant that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy child Jesus.’ The word is ταῖς. Now
παῖς may mean 'child,' and it generally does mean 'child'; but it may mean 'servant' also. And Dr. Brown has no hesitation in saying that it means servant here. In Matt. xii. 18 the same word is translated 'servant' even in the Authorized Version, because it is a quotation from the prophet, 'Behold my servant, whom I have chosen.' And there is no record that signs and wonders were done by the Child Jesus. The record is all against it. Not until His baptism and the descent upon Him of the Holy Spirit did He enter upon His public work and begin His signs and wonders. 'This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee.'

And this demand, that our Lord's work belongs to His manhood, controls the interpretation of another much-disputed passage. Luke ii. 49 is rendered in the Authorized Version, 'Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?' The last word should have been given in italics, for there is nothing corresponding to it in the Greek. The Greek is simply ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου, 'in the . . . of My Father.' Is business right then? Says Dr. Brown: 'When the Chairman of the Revision Company read out this verse, he said, "I suppose no one will propose to change this?" "Yes, I will," I said, being convinced that this supplement does not give the true sense of the clause. I hold that house is the right supplement. Our Lord never did His Father's business till He began His public ministry. Further, as Meyer well says, His answer to the question of His mother was not to the point if business is right. For she did not want to know what He had been doing, but where He had been. "Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." "My Father and I have not been seeking Me (is His reply); I have been with Him all this time,—in His house, the temple."

'To my surprise,' continues Dr. Brown, 'this reading of the verse was unanimously adopted. But when the time for the second reading of that Gospel came, they had forgotten, I suppose, their reason for accepting this rendering of the verse, and restored the Authorized Version, putting the other in the margin.' But a great scholar came to the rescue. Dr. Field of Norwich had been invited to join the Company of Revisers. Being, however, eighty years of age and 'stone-deaf,' he had declined. Yet he sent frequent criticisms of the work as it went forward. So when Dr. Field observed 'business' in the text and 'house' in the margin, he wrote regretting that it was not the other way. He showed by references to similar ellipses that a Greek would understand house and not business. He reminded them that the Syriac Version had it so. Whereupon the Revisers restored 'house' to the text, and put the Authorized 'business' in the margin.

But more important is the verse which follows, Luke i. 35. The Authorized Version gives it thus: 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.' In the Revised we find Most High instead of Highest, an obvious improvement. But the second clause is totally different: 'Wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God.' Now it is not the grammar that demands this change. The grammar if anything is against it. For, as Dr. Brown points out, there is force in Meyer's objection that such a rendering would require that 'holy' and 'the Son of God' should be looked upon as two predicates with the necessity of and between them. There is force in that objection—some force, but not much. For the proper predicate is holy, and 'the Son of God' is an explanatory clause—epexegetical in the words of the grammarians. As for Gedet's objection that the predicate should be, not 'shall be called holy,' but 'shall be holy,' since 'holy' is not a title—of course it is not a title, says Dr. Brown, and it never was meant to be. In Luke ii. 23 we read: 'Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy.' The words are exactly the same as here, and 'does anybody suppose that every
male child got the title of holy'? The thing is absurd.

Well, if the grammar allows, the sense demands the rendering which the Revisers offer. For surely it was not the Redeemer's Sonship that was secured by the miraculous conception. He was Son of God already. But if He is to be born of man; if He is to come in the likeness of sinful flesh, is it not necessary that His sinlessness should be secured, and not only secured, but pronounced secure? His sinlessness or holiness is secured by the overshadowing power of the Most High; and He is pronounced holy by the words of the angel to Mary: it was the very message He was sent to declare to her.

The Theology of the Psalms.


LIFE'S PROBLEMS.

Spiritual fellowship with God, as a member of the chosen nation, formed the Psalmist's chief joy. But material considerations were by no means disregarded in his religion. For one thing, they could not be; the conditions of life were sometimes hard in the extreme, far beyond the conceptions of arm-chair saints or philosophers of happier days. Further, the religion of Israel traditionally associated piety and prosperity. Obey, and it shall be well with thee; disobey, and perish; is the language of law and prophets alike. The prayers and praises of the Psalms would neither be honest on the one hand, nor in accordance with the characteristic genius of Hebrew religion on the other, if they were not concerned with the joys and sorrows, successes and failures, prosperity and adversity, of concrete individual and national life. And, as every reader knows, this is their main concern. Loftiness is not lacking, but it does not form the main web and fibre of the Psalms. The singers of these sacred lyrics brought their common life into their religion, and their religion into their common life. They lived in the spirit of St. James' words written long afterwards, 'Is any among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praise.'

But no sooner is this done, than difficulties begin to arise. To move in the purely spiritual region is to fly in the air; to interweave religion with common life is to travel upon the earth, and to meet with obstacles and pitfalls innumerable. For the suffering to pray is easy; but suppose deliverance does not come? For the cheerful to sing praise is not difficult, but how if cheerfulness abounds chiefly among those who do not sing praise, but pour out blasphemies? These questions may not occur to the mind of the saint; or if they do, may be so speedily stifled that it is as if they had not been. Where, however, they have once openly been asked, they must be answered, or be declared unanswerable. And an answer is likely to take one or other of the following forms:-(1) God will speedily intervene in answer to prayer. (2) Delay may take place, in which case chastisement is wholesome for the sufferer. (3) A better state of things may be expected in some later epoch of national or earthly life. (4) The balance will be redressed in a future state. There remain the possible alternatives: (5) No redress is to be certainly looked for, no explanation can be given of the problems of life. Yet God is good; this is the refuge of the baffled saint. Or (6) there is no God that judgeth in the earth; which is the resort of the despairing and sceptical sinner.

The writers of the Psalms seldom touch upon these world-old problems. They are in trouble, and they cry to God for help; or they are happy, and they praise His name; they hopefully anticipate deliverance, or earnestly expostulate with God, or patiently submit to the counsel of His will; their hopes and fears alternate very rapidly, like the sunshine and shadow, the 'chequer-work of light and shade' upon the hillside on a summer's day; but they seldom doubt or question, and hardly ever deny. A few psalms, like the 73rd and 77th, describe in full the mood of questioning and a succeeding mood of relief and enlightenment, but there are not many