

THE DOWNFALL OF NAPOLEON. (*Blackie.* Crown 8vo, pp. 224. 1s. 4d.) Sir Walter Scott's *Life of Napoleon Buonaparte* deserved a place in the 'School and Home Library,' but it was wise not to give it all. This is a carefully chosen volume, and its interest is as keen as its moral is clear and impressive.

TEXTS AND STUDIES: THE OLD LATIN AND THE ITALA. By F. C. BURKITT, M.A. (Cambridge: *At the University Press.* 8vo, pp. viii + 96. 3s. net.) The Latin versions of the Bible have, as Mr. Burkitt says, both a popular and a scholarly interest. It is from the Latin versions that we get the name Calvary, which, in our popular speech, has displaced both the Aramaic Golgotha and the Greek Kranion. And we have worse things from the Latin versions than that—the difficulty about *eternity* and the heresy of *doing penance* in place of repenting. But the scholarly interest is greater, though it is not even yet heartily recognised; for since the *independent* value of so many of the Greek MSS. has been discounted, the Latin versions gain in corresponding importance.

Well, Mr. Burkitt tells us all we need to know about the old Latin version. And when he has done that, and done it with both scholarship and grace, he turns to tell us that what we considered another Old Latin version, namely, the *Itala* of St. Augustine, is no Old Latin at all, but just the Vulgate itself. That is the surprise of Mr. Burkitt's book. But Mr. Burkitt has wrought so patiently with it that his surprise is likely to become our certainty.

A REVIEW OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE EUCHARIST. BY DANIEL WATERLAND, D.D. (Oxford: *At the Clarendon Press.* Crown 8vo, pp. xii + 674. 6s. 6d.) It is a reprint, in Oxford's best style, of Van Mildert's edition of 1856. We have all travelled since 1856, and, on this subject, some have travelled fast and far. So here is Waterland, to a new generation with new thoughts on the Eucharist, new losses and gains. There are probably ten who will study it now for one who studied it then, when it 'was almost as the text-book of the Church of England on the subject of the Eucharist.'

## Sermonettes on the Golden Texts.

BY THE REV. G. M. MACKIE, M.A., BEYROUT.

### The Law of Christian Love.

'Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.'—ROM, xii. 10.

THE power of the gospel to create loving-kindness is the supreme internal proof that it has behind it a divine origin, and in front of it a universal dominion. It is this fact that puts the gospel in touch at once with the divine glory and the deepest want of human life. Nothing can be conceived of as lying more directly in the line of God's purpose and of man's welfare than this power to produce, promote, and perpetuate loving-kindness.

For, on the one hand, drawing its origin from God, it proclaims that God is love, and therefore to walk in love means that in a measure you think God's thoughts, live God's life, and are a partaker of the divine nature. As it was with the

tabernacle and its service, so in the bodily temple and its living sacrifice, everything is still after the divine pattern—

My Father, who in secret sees and works,  
And waits and watches to waylay with love.

On the other hand, on the human side, amid the brightest ambitions that can fire the mind and the sweetest and noblest graces that can adorn character, amid all the things that are true and beautiful and of good report, there is nothing that can take the place of patient, painstaking, practical loving-kindness. It is most divine when most human. It is a living reminder, indeed, in a sense a constant repeating, of the Incarnation. Now, it is just this double relationship, the connexion with God as well as with man, that reveals the peculiar efficacy of Christian love. It is the motive that seeks the welfare of our fellow-men, but it is also the faculty that gives us glimpses of the divine love, and

enables us to express its dimensions in the language of measurement. There is breadth, there is height, there is length, but to multiply and find the contents is to exercise a faculty that is only growing yet. In the healthy and sincere exercise of Christian love there is always a double result, a double expansion. The blessing that is carried outwards makes room for a blessing that is left behind it. The good that is conveyed to man reveals to me the goodness of God. It is like God to prefer that He should be known and loved in this way. You find an example of this double connexion and efficacy of love in the Epistle to the Romans, where the apostle, after pouring out his heart in missionary importunity on behalf of Israel and the Gentile world, rises to the rapture of apostrophe, and cries—*O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!* Again, in the 9th chapter of 2 Cor., after dwelling delightfully on 'the ministering to the saints' and the duty and privilege of giving, the same apostle closes with a word that in literary style may be an abrupt transition, but in the law of love is the blending of the heavenly and the human—*Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift.*

Further, it is interesting and instructive to find that he who made it one and the same thing to be the debtor of Christ and of the world, also realised that there are other high and beautiful names that may claim, and often do claim, to take the place of love as the leading feature and fundamental fact of the Christian life. Thus in the chapter of all-conquering love (1 Cor. xiii.), the description seems to follow the order of a Roman triumphal procession, with a train of captives behind the car, and in front a bright pageant of the brave generals and the forces that led on to victory. As one captain comes on after another with his faithful legion, the crowd, with its pent-up acclamation, might think that this is he, but it is not.

First comes eloquence, that invests common things with dignity, charms with the disclosure of their concealed loveliness, and by sympathetic insight and pleasing tones makes the subject interesting, personal, and important to those that hear it. It was this that Moses coveted, and since then the want of it has often justified indolence. The remedy is in the words, 'I will be with thee.' For the best results, it is the heart that makes the voice, and deep that calls to deep. Eloquence is not enough: for

there are silent saints, and words are sometimes only words, and all gifts are not graces. Eloquence is a good officer, but a poor general.

Then comes the prophet, preacher, expositor. He knows the moral law and the mind of man. He can map out the boundaries of the kingdom. He knows the pathless wilderness, and the worse wilderness of intersecting ways. He knows it all, the places of plenty, the wells of refreshment, and the stages that must be travelled by starlight. But preaching is at best preparatory: it leads to Pisgah and passes. Dependence upon preachers and conferences may go beyond the point of helpfulness. There is sometimes progress by privation, as is alluded to in Rutherford's experience—

Oft in my sea-beat prison, *my Lord and I* held tryst,  
For Anwoth was not heaven, even preaching was not  
Christ.

So also it is with the hero, faith: the spectacle of personal faith, if love is not behind it, may pass as a spectacle and remain personal. The dust and uproar of the dislodged mountain may not move a molecule in the hearts of men towards that subtle convulsion that makes the heart of stone a heart of flesh.

So with benevolence; so with martyrdom; all of them subordinate, supplementary, parts of a whole, means to an end. Then comes love, highest in the highest, the missionary gospel, the fundamental law of the kingdom of Christ.

It is no adorning of the doctrine, but the doctrine itself: not the bloom on the complexion, but the very life-blood within the new creature in Christ Jesus. To this we are called, and to this in turn we call. In a word, and there is no getting over it, or past it, or under it, it ought to be said of the saint as it was sung of Sylvia, 'Beauty dwells with kindness.'

### The Pathway of Power.

'The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?'—Ps. xxvii. 1.

LIGHT, SALVATION, STRENGTH.—Three great waves of the sea, telling that the tide can rise no higher.

Three great waves of the sea; far out behind the foam they rise from their ambush in the ocean bed; in long lines, like a regiment led to the

assault, they come on with quickening pace and proudly-flying plumes. From each in turn comes the crash of its simultaneous discharge, then a swift irresistible rush, and the pebbly breastwork of the beach is carried. Where the waves stand they stay. The tide is full. Even so it is with the heart that can say, 'The Lord is my light, and my salvation; the Lord is the strength of my life.'

It is a testimony of experience, a fact of life. We are here told how it feels inside the armour of God. We have it from one who is putting off his armour, after being in the battle and coming out of it flushed with victory, and ready for even a longer and more difficult warfare.

Light, salvation, strength: let us ask these words to lead us into the full meaning of the Psalmist's testimony, and show us how in the same lines we may seek the same spiritual power.

I. THE LORD IS *my Light*.—We can never think too much of light; we can never welcome it too joyfully. It need not alarm those who have a measure of it, to find that its increase often startles and sometimes stings. In the natural world God gives us a night between every two days, and in the life beyond we hear of a bow of emerald that breaks the dazzle of the great white throne. Light means truth, and as it advances in precision and purity the steps of discovered truth become the songs of degrees with which the tribes go up to the great temple of God.

In the spiritual life, both as regards salvation and service, much depends on clearness of vision, the knowledge of how and where to look, and what to look for. 'From darkness to light' is one of the most expressive summaries of the spiritual life. The Jews' wailing-place by the wall of Jerusalem is an affecting commentary on the use and abuse of light. All through the Bible story you hear of the insufficiency of light, or of inability to follow it; footsteps arrested where the way divides, hallooings from the mist that hides both path and precipice, and outcries in the darkness that confuses all colour, size, and shape.

Where is the place of wisdom? How can these things be?

What must I do? How can we know the way? Give me this power. Come over and help us.

O for a vision and a voice to lead me!

To tell me plainly where my path should lie:

Look where I may, fresh hindrances impede me;

Vain and unanswered seems my earnest cry.

What relief at such a time to hear a clear, carrying voice that can say, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord'! The Psalmist tells how he found that the Lord was at hand, and how he was brought into His presence. He was called and came. The voice of One who seeks the souls of men, as well as searches their hearts, had said to him, 'Seek ye my face.' When the moment of action came it was found wonderfully easy for the heart to answer—

Thy face, Lord, will I seek.

He could say—

The Lord is my Light.

II. THE LORD IS MY SALVATION.—The words 'Christ for us' have now a clear and exact meaning, setting forth the condition and character of Salvation. And before Christ was crucified for sinners, the main feature of salvation was the same; it was from the Lord, a gift from His hand.

Blessed is the man whose sin is covered.

Sin was then also a transgression, a taint, and a tyranny, and from all the Lord delivered. It was His doing, and man could not add to it nor take from it. It was His to deliver the soul from death, the eyes from tears, and the feet from falling.

This fact at once humbled and upheld him; it was the Lord's gift, and yet it was his own possession.

And so he could say—

Whom shall I fear?

The Lord is my salvation.

III.—THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH.—Light for the understanding and its judgment; salvation for the heart, its hardness and anxiety; and strength for action and usefulness.

How often we come to the Lord, like James and John, and say 'we are able'; but the Lord makes a thorough work of the first and second, the light and salvation, before He entrusts us with the third, the strength on which He puts His own almighty name.

We often bring misery upon ourselves, and darkness upon others, by trying to come into the Lord's service before coming to the Lord Himself.

Let us seek the power in the pathway of power:—light, salvation, strength.

## The Anguish of Moral Defeat.

'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.'—Ps. li. 10.

THE place of sacrifice is always a sanctuary, and the ground holy where sin is confessed. It is a tradition universal as religion itself, that where God spares, man cannot destroy.

As life rises in complicity, its enjoyment of higher pleasures is accompanied by a liability to more terrible pains. There is no pain like the pain of spiritual collapse, and the higher the sainthood the more acute the suffering. David was the sweet singer of Israel, and his harp had many strings; now only one was left, and only one low note could be repeated, 'Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.'

David had been anxious to build a beautiful temple, and set about collecting materials, the cedar, the jewels, and the precious metals; but now the fair vision of the rising walls and finished glory was suddenly snatched away, and his only offering to God was a heart of dust.

David went with his sin to his God and Judge, but the necessity which he discovered in his uttermost need, the prayer that arose from his pain, and the chastened hope that followed his humiliation, have since been a help and guidance to many who have found sin intolerable, and longed for a closer walk with God.

Among the many interesting sights in and around Jerusalem, there is perhaps none more affecting than the patch of blue-black mould, that the visitor is directed to beyond the Damascus gate. What thoughts come into the Christian heart as the guide says, 'This is where they emptied the ashes of the sacrifice.' How long they have been lying there for the sun to bake and the rain to drench! but they were once warm. The Lord knows by His spirit the groanings that cannot be uttered. God's saints are often driven to envy the insects with their accuracy, and long to be in the possession of something that would make their actions automatic. Oh to be one self instead of two selves, to imitate the bee with its cells, the beaver with its barricades, or the rock-crystal that gets its shape and keeps it!

CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART.—When we think of the full meaning of that prayer, how very few of us can dare to utter it! For after it, it is no more my keeping what God has committed unto

me; it is entirely His keeping of what I have committed unto Him. And I commit everything as I confess everything—rebellion, degradation, slavery. God created me, and created me alone with something to create; to create something out of nothing; to choose and to refuse. But this prayer, 'Create in me a clean heart,' means that I fall before Him and ask Him to take back this gift or keep it for me. This unique honour of freedom which I have laid in the dust and sold into slavery, this touch of the divine nature with which He has entrusted me, I want to empty myself of it, and by one act of eternal choice to do the will of God forever.

This is the asking that receives; this is the coming about which He says, 'I will in nowise cast out,'—it is the emptiness He undertakes to fill; it is the weakness in which His power is safe to do its perfect work. God can now do what He likes with His own, and His wish is to give me the kingdom; it is now a purpose that affects His own glory to bring me into His own presence. I have cast my burden upon Him, and He must sustain me, and keep me, and comfort me.

From such an act of surrender you may rise without voice heard or change experienced, but faith has done its work; you will find that something has entered into your life that is infinitely better than the selfish safety and mechanical constraint that you formerly coveted. You are kept strong for the indwelling of God's spirit and the triumph of God's grace, but you are left weak for the sympathy and service of your fellow-men.

Abide in Me, and I in you.

## Sonship and Citizenship.

'Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.'—Ex. xx. 12.

THE commandments are framed expressly for the transgressor, and stated in terms of anticipated disobedience in thought, word, or deed. They are not ideals of aspiration, but rather obstacles that have to be stepped over or flung aside in the way of evil. Hence the language of reward and punishment, and what from the human point of view may be called the humiliation of associated interest.

The subject-matter of the commandments is (1)

religious, (2) domestic, (3) social. With regard to each department, the duty is so obvious, and the relationship so commendable in itself, that where the life is unselfish and the heart right with God, there should be no need of any further personal advantage or prudential consideration. It would be adding perfume to the violet. But the human heart is not here regarded as a violet, and so the law enters. The point is, that sin is taken account of, and selfishness has the discovery forced upon it that God's universe is set against it.

The fitness of the promise attached to filial obedience is best seen when taken in connexion with the others. Thus in the commandments that relate specially to God,—and He unites with the worship of Himself our reverence towards the dumb creation that He has put under us,—in these commandments with regard to our worship of Him alone, the hallowing of His name, and the observance of the Sabbath rest, we are plainly told that sin is transgression, and transgression will bring punishment that may take its terrible course through several generations. Again, with regard to the commandments that deal with social life, our honesty, veracity, purity, generosity, and all our behaviour towards friends and neighbours, there is here an obvious law of mutual advantage at work. Compliance here means convenience, and refusal will give rise to retaliation. As the Oriental proverb expresses it, 'He who does not invite me to his marriage will not have me at his funeral.' This may not seem a high level, but it is in the direction of exposed and exhausted evil. It is a road on which saint and sinner move together: Publican and Pharisee show the same ticket. Yet it is something to translate self into society: the personal into the patriotic. This social law is no flower-garden, but it makes the vegetable mould in which flowers may come to grow. It is the principle of a preparatory stage. The law is a taskmaster that leads forward to the school of Christ.

But now when we come to the family life we are conscious of a difference. The happiness of parents is in their children. Here the law of retaliation does not hold. Father and mother are happy in the forfeiture of comforts to themselves that turn to the advantage of their children. Their name has not the exaltation of God's name, and their love has not the optionality of social help. They cannot but love. The perseverance

of parental love comes nearest to God's patience. Faith has received its highest assurance when it can say, 'When father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.'

And it is just here that transgression may see its chance, and the selfish heart may find an opportunity.

Forgetting that it is those who love me most that can be made to suffer most, I may say, 'I can do what I like: they still love me, forgive me, and believe in me.'

Then the law comes in, and He who gave the commandment attends to the condemnation.

Jacob lied to his father, and in after years he knew for many a day the connexion between sorrow and sighing on account of the lie that his children told to him. His sin had doubtless been forgiven, but the punishment went on.

The commandments being understood as meant for the transgressor, we can see how the promise of this commandment is specially adapted to the commonest temptation.

Youth is apt to chafe against restraint and the counsel of experience. The untried judgment looks upon life as easy: the strong young heart pants for life, and seeks scope for its energies.

Thus Absalom sought his father's place, and the prodigal son his share of the inheritance. In each case life was sought through an anticipation of the father's death.

Here the commandment declares, not as a beautiful exhortation, but as a fact furnished with sting and lash, that such is not the way of life, of high exploits, or extended influence.

The home, with its life of pure affection, unselfish service, ready obedience, and parental honour, is ever to be safeguarded as the truest birthplace of those who go out with power into the world of action to fear God, reverence the king, and love the brethren. And the truth of the natural life is the emblem of the spiritual, which is first sonship and then citizenship.

### Life.

'The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.'—Ps. i. 6.

THE harp of Zion is wonderfully rich in its range of expression; it has some shrill and thinly-tremulous strings, and many deeply solemn tones.

Its first note is a calmly judicial pronouncement upon the distinction and destiny of the good and evil, and its last note is a happy and heavenward aspiration—'Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.'

*Heart-felt* is the word that seems to apply throughout. The Psalms deal with feelings, and the feelings deal with things that can be felt. No poet ever addressed an ode to the equator.

The Psalms were sung in public worship, but they borrow nothing from the temple and its ceremonial. There is reasoning in both the praises and the prayers; but the Psalms are not epistles. There is history in front of them and prophecy behind them, but every psalm is for the present hour and its need—'This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.'

In this first Psalm, and in the second, which gives a national expression to what in the first is personal, there is a clear moral outlook upon life, and an unreserved declaration of the blessedness of all them that put their trust in God.

1. The theme of the Psalms.—Like the great classics, the Book of Psalms gives its theme in the first line—the sorrows of moral discord. There are the good, and there are the evil in the world. Each class makes provision for its own wants; maintains its own life, and strives for immortality. Evil propagates and popularises itself by the counsel of the ungodly, the companionship of the way of sinners, the sociability that flourishes or festers around the seat of the scornful. The good also cannot live alone; it has its adviser, its pathway, its friendship. These are found in the law of the Lord.

2. The vision of rest.—In spite of the many complaints and remonstrances that will be heard later on, the true emblem of the religious life is

that of refreshment and rest. We have the picture of a great, green walnut-tree in a Syrian valley. The wide-spreading branches afford a cool shade, the breeze stirs the fragrance of its large leaves; the brook rushing past sings of life and fertility, of refreshment and renewal; while outside, the sun beats down, the air quivers, the grass droops, the very birds and insects cease their chirping and hum, and the whole land lies under the heat and burden of the day.

The life of faith is like this; when the servant of God needs it for himself, he can retreat into such a place of rest; when he is strong, he can be the walnut-tree; he can refresh those who are fainting, and help the weary to sing the praises of their pilgrimage.

3. For the evil, also, there is an emblem: the chaff of the threshing-floor. It means a double failure, to have nothing more to seek for self, and not to be wanted by others; in the last result, to be found both wasted and worthless.

4. The pictures are given separately, but in the life of which they are emblems there is a pathway between them.

The disappointment of the threshing-floor was once the hope of the green field. The light ears that are now all husk might have been filled with good seed if the day of opportunity had been more wisely used, if the hours of sunny influence had not been neglected. Things might have been different if the ground had been better tilled, if parental and friendly sympathy had been more watchful, encouraging, and sincere. Life is real, and God is not mocked; but life has also its rallying-points, and God is merciful.

'Knowing the terror of the Lord'—it is not, we leave men alone, but, 'we persuade men.'

## Contributions and Comments.

### Asherah; the Erodus.

SOME years ago I copied, at the hermitage in St. Petersburg, a cuneiform inscription on a Babylonian seal which reads: 'The god Ra-ta-nu-um; the goddess As-ra-tum.' Here, therefore, the Canaanite goddess Asratum, or Asherah, is coupled with a god whose name seems to be Ratanum, though the reading is not absolutely certain, as

the second character (*ta*) has an unusual form. If the reading is right, it is difficult to explain the name, unless, indeed, we are to connect it with Retennu, the Egyptian equivalent of 'Syria.'

The translation of the inscription of Menepthah discovered by Professor Petrie, which you have quoted from his article in the *Contemporary Review*, will have to be corrected in certain respects, as it was made from an imperfect copy of the text.