

mile? Or if it did occur, the probability is that to act it literally out would be to contradict the Saviour's meaning. The instance is extreme; it is impracticable; it is not given to be practised; but it carries the principle with it, and it carries that principle in the most memorable form.

It is a method of preaching, and all great preachers use it. Dr. Whyte uses it. In a sermon published in the previous issue of the *British Weekly* he speaks of unceasing prayer. He tells his hearers to fetch a diary and make a cross on the day's page of it for every time they had to flee from their own heart to the blood of Christ, 'On the mid-day street to-morrow,' he says, 'you would stop to make those sad marks in your book; at your meals you would make them;

at business; at calls; and in conversation with your wisest and best and least sin-provoking friends. At your work,' he goes on, 'at your family worship, in your pew on Sabbath, at the Lord's Table itself; and, if you were a minister, in your very pulpit.'

Did his hearers misunderstand him? Did they say, How exaggerated, how paradoxical? Did they not know that if they brought out their diary 'at calls' and made the cross, they would be contradicting his principle, his lesson, and not fulfilling it? Did they not know that he himself would contradict himself if he took out his diary in the pulpit and made his cross? Dr. Whyte is a preacher. And Jesus Christ is a preacher. And they both use the extreme example to carry the great lesson home.

The Heathen and Future Probation.

BY THE REV. JOHN C. LAMBERT, M.A., B.D.

AMONG the many problems which have to be faced by the student of eschatology, there is none that is more strangely fascinating than the question of Future Probation. It is a question which, in these days, has come very much to the front, partly, no doubt, because the widespread missionary interests of the Church have brought us into such close contact with the heathen peoples all over the globe, and have compelled us to speculate regarding their destiny in the world to come. It is with special reference to the heathen that I propose to discuss the subject.

I think we have to confess that, apart from the hope of Future Probation, the prospects of the vast majority of the human race for the eternal future look very dark indeed. We have only to remember the countless millions of the heathen world, the life they live, the death they die—and the question forces itself upon us, What becomes of them beyond the grave? Does probation, in their case, absolutely end with death? Or have we any ground for believing, or hoping, that the offer of salvation through Christ may come to

them during the state that intervenes between death and the Judgment? The old orthodoxy said, without much hesitation, that they were all going down swiftly to everlasting destruction. The newer orthodoxy usually seeks to relieve the stress of the problem by dwelling upon the wealth of their natural endowments and opportunities. 'They have the light of nature,' it says, 'that light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. The following of that natural light amounts to an unconscious following of Jesus Christ. The divine law is written upon every heart, and when men walk according to that inner law, they are certainly accepted with God.' It all sounds very well—so long as we remain in the region of abstractions. But when we come to the actual facts of the situation, it does not bring much help or comfort. Think of the light of nature in most heathen lands, as we really know them. Imagine a state of society in which cruelty and falsehood and impurity are the inheritance of the tribe, and the inveterate habits of everyday life. How much of the 'Light of

the world' is shining to-day in the heart of the African bush, or on the surf-washed Solomon Islands? And if we are pointed to a land like China, and told of the comparative enlightenment, at least, of men who have the moral precepts of Confucius to guide them, we must remember that a man's deepest need, with a view to spiritual salvation, is not light but life. He needs to be 'born again,' 'born from above.' Paul had a better light to guide his way than is possessed by the most enlightened Chinaman; but Paul cried, 'To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.'

I think, then, that we must admit that, apart from the possibilities which lie enfolded in the Intermediate State, the problem of heathen destiny remains sombre in the extreme. But those possibilities ought not to be forgotten or ignored. No doubt the Roman Catholic Church, by its elaborate absurdities regarding Purgatory with all its limbos, has made us shy and suspicious of the whole subject of the Intermediate State. And yet we should remember that by being so, as Dr. Newman Smyth has said, 'we may lose divine intimations of certain truths that are needed to complete our doctrine of the future'; and, for want of those truths, 'our faith in God's justice and mercy may suffer harm' (*Orthodox Theology of To-day*).

In speaking of probation, I start from the position that the probation of a soul, with a view to its eternal salvation, depends essentially upon the offer of Christ to that soul. I do not see how any other position can be taken up, in the face of the teaching of the New Testament, and the constant claims of Christ Himself. And so, when we speak of *Future Probation*, we have to distinguish between two classes—those who in this life have had the offer of Christ, and those who have not.

Now with regard to the first class, I confess that I can find no adequate ground in Scripture for any hope whatsoever of *Future Probation* for them. On the contrary, there is an unflinching note of terrible urgency in the appeal that is made to all who hear the gospel to accept it here and now. We may dispute, if we please, the old evangelical interpretation of the words, 'Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation'; but we can hardly get away from the impression produced by the teaching of Christ and His apostles that, for all who hear Christ's gracious message in this

present life, this present life is the time of final decision. But when we pass to those who have had no opportunity in this life of hearing of Christ, and deciding either for Him or against Him, it does appear to me that the New Testament gives us reason to expect that Christ will come to them as a Saviour before He summons them to meet Him as a Judge.

The passage which is commonly alleged in opposition to any such idea is Ro 2⁵⁻¹⁶. But what St. Paul teaches in this passage does not amount, surely, to a dispensing with the necessity for Christian faith in order to salvation. He says (v.¹²), 'As many as have sinned without law shall perish without law,' *i.e.* their punishment shall not be meted out according to the standards of a law of which they were ignorant. And again he says (vv.¹⁴⁻¹⁵), that when they 'do by nature the things contained in the law,' they are 'a law unto themselves,' and 'show the work of the law written in their hearts'; which implies that they shall be rewarded at the Judgment for living up to such light as they had. We cannot suppose, however, that St. Paul is teaching in this passage that the Gentile shall be saved by obedience to the natural law, any more than he is teaching that the Jew shall be saved by obedience to the Jewish law. The passage ends with the phrase, 'according to my gospel' (v.¹⁶); and we know what St. Paul's 'gospel' always is. We have only to turn to the next chapter to find him stating it repeatedly and emphatically: 'By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified' (3²⁰); 'therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith' (3²⁸); 'it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith' (3³⁰).

The truth is, that in the New Testament teaching regarding the Judgment two entirely different principles of judgment are set before us—judgment according to faith, and judgment according to works; with two different sets of results flowing from each—in the one case the salvation or loss of the soul, and in the other the degree of its reward or punishment. In the passage referred to in Ro 2, St. Paul is speaking of the latter of the two principles of judgment, judgment by works—the righteous judgment of God, who will render unto every man according to his deeds' (vv. 5, 6). But the fact that St. Paul holds to the principle that the degree of our punishment or reward depends

upon our life deeds, does not affect his faith in the other, and still more vital, principle of Christianity, that men are saved on the ground of faith, and condemned on the ground of unbelief. In the great Vision of Judgment in Rev 20^{12, 13}, it seems to be these two principles that are set before us under the symbols of the twofold books—the books in which our works are written, and the other book which is the book of life. Faith is the first test; and upon this there hang the main issues of the Judgment—the eternal salvation or loss of the soul, its being found, or not being found, in the book of life. But there is another test, by which the Judge determines the degree of the soul's loss or the degree of its gain; men are rewarded according to their deeds, according to the things which are written in the books.

It does not appear, then, that the exegesis of Ro 2⁵⁻¹⁶, in the light of the New Testament teaching generally, supports the idea that obedience to the law of nature is sufficient for the salvation of the heathen, and that Christian faith can therefore be dispensed with. And there are other considerations that tell against it equally. For how can we speak as Christian apologists of the inadequacy of the natural light, and urge the absolute necessity of Christ's Advent, on the ground that 'the world by wisdom knew not God,' and then, when we turn to the practical aspects of soteriology, profess that the light of nature is sufficient after all to bring the world into fellowship with God? Or again, how can we dwell at one time upon the fact of man's terrible moral inability, apart from the quickening power of the Spirit of Christ, and then imply at another that those who have not the Spirit of Christ, in the proper sense of the words, are possessed of all the moral freedom that they require for the determination of their eternal blessedness?

But now let us proceed to ask if we have any positive grounds for believing, or hoping, that those who have had no offer of Christ during their life on earth will receive such an offer before the Day of Judgment. Well, in the first place, the New Testament constantly teaches that there is no salvation apart from Christ. It is only faith in Him that saves; no amount of intellectual or moral enlightenment will do it. And then, in the next place, it affirms, with no less insistence, that God is willing that all should be saved, and unwilling that any should perish. Putting to-

gether these two familiar Christian truths, the conclusion seems almost inevitable, that at some time or other, under the government of a just and merciful God, there must come to every soul of man the offer of salvation through Jesus Christ.

We reach the same conclusion when we consider this other great principle of the New Testament teaching—that the Judge of all men is Jesus Christ Himself, and that He is to judge us by His word. 'Sinners will be condemned, not for their sin, but for their unbelief, which consists in this, that they will not suffer Christ to save them from their sins.' Does not this again appear to imply that all men, at some time or other of their spiritual history, and before they stand up at Christ's Judgment-seat, shall have the opportunity of believing, or refusing to believe, in the Son of God? Faith in Christ is the decisive question; and how can men believe in Him of whom they have not heard?

These are arguments in favour of Future Probation. But they are arguments only; and what we should like to have, upon such a subject, is some definite statement of Holy Scripture itself. Well this brings us to the two well-known passages in 1 Peter, about the preaching 'to the spirits in prison,' and the preaching 'to the dead.' Now with regard to these passages, everything of course depends upon the exegesis which they receive. It is possible to interpret them in a way which makes them have no bearing whatever upon the subject of Future Probation. And that is often done. The idea of some scholars is to accommodate them to a view of the future life from which any consideration of the Intermediate State is practically eliminated. I have no time to go into the various interpretations of the first of the two passages (1 P 3¹⁸⁻²⁰), which speaks of Christ preaching to the spirits in prison; but the favourite traditional one is, that by the Holy Spirit Christ preached through Noah to the sinners who lived before the Flood. This, however, can hardly be described as the meaning which the words naturally suggest. And there can be no doubt that the weight of modern scholarship is against it. Dean Alford says: 'With the great majority of commentators, ancient and modern, I understand these words to say that our Lord, in His disembodied state, did go to the place of detention of departed spirits, and did

there announce His work of redemption, preach salvation in fact, to the disembodied spirits of those who refused to obey the voice of God when the judgment of the Flood was hanging over them.' And Dr. Salmond, while arguing strongly against this view, admits that it is certainly the one which is at present in the ascendant (*Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, p. 466).

But if we accept the interpretation I have just quoted, it seems inevitable that we should go somewhat further. For we can hardly suppose that Christ 'preached salvation' only to the antediluvian sinners. Upon no principle of sound reason could we limit the offer of salvation to them. We can only suppose that they are singled out because of their 'exceeding sinfulness,' as signal examples of the mercy of Christ. It reminds us of Bunyan's famous sermon, *Jerusalem Sinners Saved*, in which he takes the command to begin with the gospel at Jerusalem as a command to take it to the very worst of men. 'For Christ,' he says, 'will show mercy where sins are in number the most, in cry the loudest, in weight the heaviest. It is thus that He gets to Himself a glorious name.' In like manner we conclude that if Christ preached salvation to the dead antediluvians, He will have some ministry of grace for all the generations of the dead heathen. And not till they have heard His gospel will He call upon them to appear before His Judgment-seat, in that day when He shall separate all men to the right hand and to the left.

We are confirmed, I think, in giving this wider application to the statement that Christ preached to the men of Noah's age, when we find, in the second of the two passages (1 P 4^o), the general intimation that the gospel was preached 'to them that are dead.' And notice the connexion in which this is said. In the 5th verse we read that Christ 'is ready to judge the quick and the dead,' and then in the 6th verse that 'for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead.' Is the meaning not evidently this—that in order that both the quick and the dead may justly be called upon to stand before Jesus in the Judgment, the dead must have an equal opportunity with the living of hearing the Saviour's word?

Now, it must be confessed that these two passages do not teach us very much. They give only a momentary glimpse into the darkness that

shrouds the subject of the Intermediate State, like the glimpse that comes in the midnight from a flash of lightning, leaving us no time to grasp the details of the landscape. And yet we should not brush these two passages aside, as if they had no specific and significant meaning. If we do not accept the more literal and natural interpretation which is given to them by the majority of New Testament scholars, let us at least be warned, by the very existence of such passages in the Scriptures, 'not to be over confident that we have learned the whole mind of the Spirit concerning God's work and purposes in the interval that lies between death and the final judgment.'

There can be little doubt, I think, that a belief in Future Probation for the heathen brings great relief amidst the spiritual problems which are inevitably suggested by the sight of the heathen world. No doubt it is easy for us, when we think of rare and choice spirits like Gautama and Confucius, Socrates and Plato, to realize the sufficiency for them of that *Λόγος σπερματικός* on which some of the old Greek Fathers loved to dwell. But when we talk with missionaries from Africa, or even from India and China, and learn something about the actual conditions of heathen society, our hearts sink within us, and we begin to ask ourselves, 'Who then can be saved?' We remember that two-thirds of the human race are still buried in this awful darkness, or, worse even than that, we call to mind the hundreds of millions of heathen folk who, generation after generation and century after century, have been passing away into the unseen; and Whittier's pathetic words rise up in our mind—

Oh those generations old,
Over whom no church bell tolled,
Christless, lifting up blind eyes
To the silence of the skies;
For the innumerable dead
Is my heart disquieted.

But some light does arise in the darkness, if we feel that we can legitimately look for a coming day of grace for all those who, in this world, have never truly heard 'the joyful sound.'

It may seem to some that such a belief would cut the nerve of all missionary enthusiasm and enterprise, and make it a matter of indifference whether the gospel were preached to all nations or not. But no one who calls himself a Christian

can ever shake off the urgency of the great commission: 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' Whoever may challenge the necessity of these orders, no disciple of Jesus can possibly do so. We must ever apply to ourselves the words which Mary whispered to the servants at the marriage of Cana in Galilee: 'Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it!' Besides, no one who thinks of the immeasurable difference between life in a Christian land and life in a heathen land, can profess that it matters little whether in the meantime the heathen receive the gospel or not. A true-hearted doctor will run all kinds of risks, and spend himself by day and by night, that he may deliver his fellows from bodily suffering. Are not the moral and social and

spiritual sufferings of the heathen world sufficiently dreadful to inspire Christ's people with the desire to bring deliverance without delay? And, further, we must remember this, that Future Probation does not mean certain salvation; it only means the full offer of Christ. Now we all know how greatly the disposition to receive Christ depends upon the moral and spiritual condition of the heart to which Christ comes. And men who have lived all their lives in heathenism go into the unseen world with their sins still clinging about their necks, blinding their eyes, warping their judgments, hardening their hearts and making it, to say the least, no easy thing that they should become as little children, and so enter into the kingdom of heaven.

On the Question of the Exodus.

BY PROFESSOR J. V. PRÁŠEK, PH.D., PRAGUE.

II.

ACCORDING to the Jahwistic tradition, the cradle of the Israelitish people was the land of Ur Kasdim, which is generally identified with the South Mesopotamian Ur. This was the seat of an important state and city, and in virtue of its commanding situation upon the right bank of the Euphrates (cf. on this point Heuzey, *Les origines orientales de l'art*, i. 110 ff.), it ruled over extensive districts on the lower course of that river and on the west coast of the Persian Gulf. Hommel and Winckler have put forward the view that the primitive kingdom of Ur is the same as the kingdom which appears in the cuneiform inscriptions as the Sumerian *Ingi-Urdu*, the Semitic *Sumir and Akkad*. The founder of this empire, Ur-gur, built also the capital, which was called Ur, and whose name took the place, in the mouth of the neighbouring nomads, of the official name of the kingdom, so that the latter also was spoken of simply as Ur. Now the progenitor of the Israelites in the land of Ur is called by the Jahwist Terah, and his son Abram is said to have left Ur and betaken himself, with his clan and that of his nephew Lot, towards the west to the land promised him by God (Gn 11²⁸⁻³⁰ 12¹⁻⁴). Abram

came as far as the spot where Shechem afterwards flourished, but where at that time the inhabitants of the land were accustomed to seek oracles from the deity under the shade of a terebinth tree (Gn 12⁶). Abram thus took what was the usual, and for larger expeditions the only possible way, which led from the Persian Gulf up the stream of the Euphrates through the Central Syrian valley (*Behâa*) to Palestine and Egypt. He would thus touch the soil of Palestine for the first time in the domain of the *Kunahaiu*-Canaanites who dwelt on the coast. It is only the Elohist (E) who mentions a very important intermediate station on this long journey, namely, the North Mesopotamian Haran (Gn 11^{31f.}), which from very early times, as the seat of an oracle of the god Sin, stood in close relations with Ur, the principal place of worship of the same deity.

There are three questions which await an answer. *Who* was Abram, or, as he is called in Palestine, Abraham? *Where* did he fix his dwelling-place in Palestine? *When* did he and his clan migrate to Palestine?

Let us commence by seeking to answer the first of these questions. It is a natural conclusion