

ordinated to the inferior one. For an edition of the Curetonian this would have been quite right, but for a book bearing the title of *Evangelion Da-Mepharreshe* it is quite wrong. And Mr. Burkitt would have laid us under an additional obligation if he had indicated where the pages of the Sinai palimpsest begin. Syriac students who visit the Convent Library in future days will take this book with them. But if they wish to verify a word, or to coax a few more letters out of some faded page, they must also burden their camels with the Syndics' edition, or, better still, with my *Select Narratives of Holy Women (Studia Sinaitica, No. ix.)* For I have there indicated not only each page, but the verse which begins it, on the margin.

These considerations detract only a little from the value of vol. i.; and not at all from that of vol. ii. They are, however, of sufficient importance to make me resolve on the preparation of a more complete edition; so as to place on record what

I believe to be, in all particulars, the true text of the Sinai manuscript.

Postscript.

(By Mrs. Gibson.)

I SHOULD like to add a word about an expression on p. 17 of Mr. Burkitt's Introduction, namely, 'they knew.' It would be kind in him thus to include me in his account of the discovery, were it not for the fact that I did not know one word of Syriac on my first two visits to Sinai. I therefore left the investigation of the Syriac MSS entirely to Mrs. Lewis, whilst I confined my attention to Greek and Arabic ones. I have twice before remonstrated with Mr. Burkitt for stating that I, as well as Mrs. Lewis, recognized the nature of the Gospel text in 1892. We ought to be accurate about events that occur in our own day, as well as about those that took place eighteen centuries ago.

MARGARET D. GIBSON.

The Great Text Commentary.

THE GREAT TEXTS OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

ACTS XXIV. 25.

'And as he reasoned of righteousness, and temperance, and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified, and answered, Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me.'—R.V.

EXPOSITION.

'And as he reasoned of righteousness, and temperance, and the judgment to come.'—This speech of Paul's was probably given in Felix's audience-chamber, and the scene was an anticipation, on a smaller scale, of that described in chap. 26. Felix, however, was a man of a different moral fibre to Festus. Paul read his character well; he would also know that Drusilla was another man's wife. Therefore, instead of delivering an oratorical 'apologia,' St Paul, like another John the Baptist, reasoned concerning the first principles of the Christ, namely, righteousness, continence, and the judgment to come.—RACKHAM.

'Righteousness.'—Our English translation very poorly represents the Greek original *περι δικαιοσύνης*, a word embracing these varied duties which every upright citizen owes to another, how much more one set over his fellows as a judge!—HOWSON.

'Temperance.'—This term must be understood in its widest sense of self-control: it implies keeping under the body with all its passions and appetites.—RENDALL.

This virtue was not unknown even in the story of pagan

Rome; and Felix' companion, the Jewess Drusilla, would call up before her mind many a fair example set by noble Hebrew matrons in the old days of Israel, an example she had never tried to follow.—HOWSON.

'Felix was terrified, and answered.'—His conscience told him that what Paul said was true. Note that it is not said that Drusilla trembled. Eugene Stock says that it was because she was too reckless and hardened. She was past feeling. Her conscience was seared as with a hot iron, for she, having been brought up as a Jew, had sinned against more light.—PELOUBET.

'Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me.'—Felix was alarmed, and broke off the audience, saying that when he found another opportunity he would summon him again for a public audience. For in private Felix had frequent conversations with him. St Paul remained in confinement in Cæsarea, waiting for the second hearing, two full years.—RACKHAM.

THE SERMON.

Now, Now—Not By-and-By.

By the Rev. Alexander Maclaren, D.D.

Felix was born a slave, but, becoming a great favourite with the Emperor Claudius, he was made procurator of Judea. He was not fit for the

position, and Tacitus tells us that 'He wielded his kingly authority with the spirit of a slave, in all cruelty and lust.' He had tempted the Princess Drusilla from her husband Azizus, king of Emesa. And now Drusilla was longing for a new sensation, and remembered Paul, her fellow-countryman. So Felix summoned Paul for a private interview. Probably they expected a philosophical discourse, but Paul 'reasoned of righteousness' with the unjust judge; 'of temperance' with the self-indulgent, sinful pair; 'of the judgment to come' with those two who thought that they could do anything they liked with impunity. And as Paul went on speaking the crisis of Felix's life came. 'Go thy way for this time,' he said, and these words marked the death of his soul.

In what ways do we resemble Felix, and what lessons are we taught by his story?

i. We also lull our awakened consciences to sleep by promises to attend to religion at some future time. When Felix said, 'When I have a convenient season,' he really meant—Not now, at all events; the thing he hoodwinked himself with was By-and-by.

ii. Why do we fall into this habit of indecision? The first reason is the natural wish to get rid of a disagreeable subject. We are like a man who has begun to suspect that he is insolvent, but who refuses to look into his books, and lets things drift till there is not a halfpenny in the pound for anybody; and certainly we would not compliment *him* on either his honesty or his prudence. Is it not the part of a wise man, if he begins to see that something is wrong, to get to the bottom of it, and as quickly as possible to set it right?

But there are other reasons why we do not decide for Christ. We think that there is time enough. Religion is all very well for people that are turned sixty, and are going down the hill, but quite unnecessary for the young. Or, perhaps, we do not consciously say, 'No! I will not,' but simply let the impressions made on our hearts and consciences be crowded out of them by cares and enjoyments and pleasures and duties of this world.

And some of us fall into this attitude of delay because we do not like to give up something that we know is inconsistent with His love and service. Felix would not part with Drusilla, nor disgorge the ill-gotten gain of his province.

iii. And now let me put before you a few of

the reasons why we should decide at once for Christ. The first is that delay is really decision the wrong way. A more convenient season than the present never comes. The oftener that we hear the gospel and put it away, the less likely are we to be touched by its power again. And also delay robs us of great blessing, and lays up very bitter memories for us. And lastly, let us give ourselves to Jesus Christ at once, because no tomorrow may be ours.

For all these reasons let us ask Christ to forgive us to-day and let us follow in His footsteps. 'To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.'

The Moral Basis of Christianity.

By the Right Rev. James Fraser, D.D.

i. *Paul reasoned of Righteousness.*—The system of invisible, divine power with which we are surrounded, from which we cannot really escape, and to which we are required to conform our lives is called 'a kingdom'; and the essential laws of this kingdom, the basis of its constitution, have been eternally, unchangeably, the same. They are embodied in our Lord's saying, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you'—words, which, in another form, had already been said by Micah, 'What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God,' and which were repeated in turn by St. Peter, St. Paul, St. James, and St. John. 'Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.' To the last it acknowledges, 'By the grace of God I am what I am,' and knows that by its own merits it cannot stand before the heart-searching Judge. Nevertheless it *is* righteousness, and not unrighteousness. *There* is a real desire not only to know, but to prove—by making an honest endeavour to do—the 'good and acceptable and perfect will of God.' And through the doing St. Paul tells us we shall know. 'If any man wills to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine.'

ii. *Paul reasoned of Temperance.*—It is quite likely that Felix, who traced his origin to the old kings of Arcadia, had read in a dilettante way the writings of Aristotle. In the ethical system of that teacher, the temperate man, is he who, feeling in himself the strain of vicious desires, keeps them in check by asserting the legitimate

supremacy of reason. But St. Paul spiritualized this moral conception. He knew that the triumph was assured by the aid of that Spirit 'who helpeth our infirmities.' Excitement, tumult, and ecstasy are not the normal constituents of the spiritual atmosphere in which the Christian moves. We know how our Lord calmed the wild excitement of the woman who cried, 'Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.' 'Yea, rather,' was the perhaps unexpected reply, 'blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.' In this age of restless excitement it is well to notice that self-control occupied the second place among the notes of the kingdom of God.

iii. *Paul reasoned of Judgment to come.*—That is the highest thought of all, the thought of man's relation to God, the thought that every man will be held accountable for all his deeds. Professor Huxley abandons the principle of free will, and so also the idea of responsibility. Mr. Greg does not believe in immortality. He says that we cannot *prove* the doctrine of immortality. We cannot prove it as we can prove the conclusion of a geometrical theorem, but as Sir William Hamilton has said, 'the existence of God and the immortality of the soul are not given as a phenomena; . . . yet if the phenomena actually given do necessarily require, for their rational explanation, the hypothesis of immortality and of God, we are assuredly entitled from the existence of the former to infer the reality of the latter.' But what would life be if there was no sense of accountability, no hope of immortality; if all men said, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die?' We dare not think of the result. We say with Voltaire, 'If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him.'

Amid all the varieties of religious belief it is possible for us to-day to build our lives with high-reaching aspirations, but in calmness, and peace and joy, so that we shall realize the apostle's idea of righteousness and temperance, and the glad looking forward to the 'judgment to come.'

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Choosing a personal Subject.—In his fourth interview with Queen Mary, John Knox insisted on speaking plainly to her about her purposed marriage with the King of Spain. A few days before he had preached in St. Giles': 'Now, my lords, to put end to all, I hear of the queen's marriage. Dukes, brethren to emperors, and kings, strive all for the

best game; but this, my lords, will I say—note the day, and bear witness after—whenever the nobility of Scotland professing the Lord Jesus, consent that an infidel—and all papists are infidels—shall be head to our sovereign, ye do so far as in ye lieth to banish Christ Jesus from this realm. Ye bring God's vengeance upon the country, a plague upon yourselves, and perchance ye shall do small comfort to your sovereign.'

In his private interview, when Queen Mary argued that he had nothing to do with her marriage, he replied, 'God hath not sent me to wait upon the courts of princes, nor upon the chambers of ladies; but I am sent to preach the evangel of Jesus Christ to such as please to hear it. It hath two parts—Repentance and Faith. Now, madam, in preaching Repentance, of necessity it is that the sins of men be so noted, that they may know wherein they offend.'—Knox's *History of the Reformation* (Guthrie's ed., pp. 328 and 331).

Self-Control.—Charles Burleigh, the abolitionist, in the midst of an anti-slavery speech, was struck full in the face by a rotten egg. 'There's a proof,' he said, as he calmly wiped his face with his handkerchief—'a proof of what I have always maintained—that pro-slavery arguments are very *unsound*.' The crowd laughed heartily, and Burleigh was allowed to speak without further molestation.

Go thy Way.—The clergyman of the village, who had taken a fancy to Gottlieb Fichte, and often assisted in his instruction, happened one day to ask him how much he thought he could remember of the sermon of the preceding day. Fichte made the attempt, and, to the astonishment of the pastor, succeeded in giving a very tolerable account of the course of argument, as well as of the texts quoted in its illustration. The circumstance was mentioned to the Count von Hoffmannsegg, the lord of the village, and one day another nobleman, the Baron von Mittiz, who was on a visit at the castle, happening to express his regret at having been too late for the sermon on the Sunday morning, he was told half in jest, that there was a boy in the village who could repeat it all from memory. Little Gottlieb was sent for. He answered the first questions put to him with his accustomed quiet simplicity; but when asked to repeat as much as he could recollect of the morning's sermon, his voice and manner became more animated, and, as he proceeded, he became so fervid and abundant in his eloquence, that the Count thought it necessary to interrupt him, lest the playful tone of the circle should be destroyed by the serious subjects of the sermon.—Lewes's *Biographical History of Philosophy*, p. 568.

A more convenient Season.—It is recorded of Archias, a chief magistrate in one of the Grecian States, that he was unpopular in his government, and excited the hatred of many of the people, who conspired against his life. The day arrived when a fatal plot was to be executed. Archias was more than half dissolved in wine and pleasure, when a courier from Athens arrived in great haste with a packet, which contained, as it afterwards appeared, a circumstantial account of the whole conspiracy. The messenger being admitted into the presence of the prince, said 'My lord, the person who writes you these letters conjures you to read them immediately; they contain serious affairs.' Archias replied,

laughing, 'Serious affairs to-morrow'; and so continued his revel. On the same night, in the midst of that noisy 'mirth, the end of which is heaviness,' the assailants rushed into the palace and murdered Archias, with his associates, leaving to the world a striking example of the evil of procrastination.—S. LOWELL.

ON an old sundial at Alfric, in Worcestershire, runs the motto, 'On this moment hangs eternity.'

TO-MORROW, and to-morrow, and to-morrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death.—*Macbeth*, Act v. Sc. v. 19.

THERE is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

Julius Caesar, Act iv. Sc. iii. 218.

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Our Lord's Reductio ad Absurdum of the Rabbinical Interpretation of Psalm cx.

(MATTHEW XXII. 41-46 = MARK XII. 35-37 = LUKE XX. 41-44.)

BY THE REV. DAVID SMITH, M.A., TULLIALLAN.

WHILE He sojourned in Jerusalem during the Passion-week, our Lord was compassed by a tempest of conflicting emotions. On the one hand, He was the hero of the multitude. Their enthusiasm had been raised to an unprecedented pitch by that transcendent miracle, the resurrection of Lazarus (Jn 12⁹⁻¹¹. 17); and, when they learned that Jesus was approaching, they went forth to meet Him, and escorted Him into the city with triumphant acclamation. He was, they were persuaded, the Messianic King of Israel, and it was fitting that He should receive a royal ovation when He entered His capital, as they fondly expected, to claim His crown and set up the fallen throne of His father David. On the other hand, the rulers, His inveterate and malignant adversaries, were hotly incensed against Him, and the popular enthusiasm fanned the flame of their fury. They would fain have seized Him incontinently and put Him out of the way, but they durst not. They knew the excitability of the multitude, and they foresaw that any assault upon the popular hero would provoke a wild and sanguinary tumult (Mk

11¹⁸ = Lk 19⁴⁷⁻⁴⁸; Mt 21⁴² = Mk 12¹² = Lk 20¹⁹; Mt 26⁵ = Mk 14² = Lk 22²).

Restrained from violence, they sought to compass their murderous purpose by craft. As He taught in the Temple court, they approached Him, and with feigned lips propounded to Him a succession of captious questions, in the hope of surprising Him into some unorthodox pronouncement which might serve as a pretext for arraigning Him before the Sanhedrin; or, at the least, of gaining a controversial advantage over Him and lowering Him in the popular esteem. But they were disappointed. He sustained each onset unshaken, and parried each thrust with consummate dexterity; and, when at length, recognizing their impotence, they fell back, crestfallen but the more exasperated, He exchanged defence for attack, and in His turn propounded a question to the Pharisees. The interpretation of the Scriptures was their peculiar province, and He met them and put them to shame on their own field and with their own weapons.

He adduced Ps 110. If it be read without prejudice, the psalm is easy of interpretation. It is