

was not a deep thinker; nor did he write to expose corruption or reform vice. He simply penned his character sketches to indulge his own feelings; and he never meant what he wrote to see the light till the time at which it could be useful, as satire had long passed away. The persons he spared least were those who had wounded his vanity or offended his prejudices. Those he praised most were the persons who had aided, obliged, or flattered him. Hence he was neither actuated by a strong sense of justice, nor a pure love of truth. He was destitute of humour, and piquancy of expression is his nearest approach to wit. In many of his descriptions he is as coarse as Swift; whilst, with few exceptions, his general reflections are commonplace. His memoirs give an accurate picture of the petty social trivialities of the time—who had the honour of holding the king's shirt when he went to bed, who lighted his majesty to the royal apartments, the feuds amongst the Court dames, the squabbles as to precedence, and the like—but of the condition of the people we learn nothing. Their chronicler tells us little of the state or progress of art, science, literature, or philosophy, whilst he can fill pages as to the claim of a duke to seniority of precedence. But like Boswell, and Pepys, and Horace Walpole, it was because Saint Simon was Saint Simon, and not cast in an heroic mould that he occupies his peculiar place in French literature—as the author of the most illustrative collection of contemporary scenes and characters which any age has produced. On the position of Venice, Mr. Hayward is agreeably erudite. The Venetian Republic lasted five hundred years; it was the only European constitution that had successfully resisted revolutionary change during that length of time, and the only modern aristocracy that ever held the supreme power long enough to constitute a settled government at all. Her chief glories were won under her ancient Doges; her few illustrious men flourished in spite of her odious laws; and if she had lived but half her life, her reputation would stand better with posterity.

These Essays are deeply interesting reading, and we are glad to notice that, in the greater portion of them, there is an absence of that levity and mundane form of reflections which occasionally mars the value of Mr. Hayward's reviews.



ART. VI.—THOUGHTS ON THE EPIPHANY.

I DOUBT whether we regard the Epiphany Season as carefully as we ought to do. Or rather I ought to say, I am sure we are apt to treat it with an indifference not quite consistent with the emphatic manner in which it is marked for us in our Book of Common Prayer.

Even on the lower ground of old-fashioned English feeling there are reasons why the Epiphany should not be viewed with indifference. It is a "scarlet day" at Oxford and Cambridge, and probably this usage dates from a very early period. Ancient rhymes and proverbs mark the season, when

The Wise Men's day here followeth, who out of Persia farre
Brought gifts and presents unto Christ, conducted by a starre.

And many circumstances could be added, which, even in a superficial sense, justify a special interest in the season. Two of these aspects of the subject may be particularly named.

First, the Epiphany is "Old Christmas Day." On the sixth of last month, when in our quiet English Churches we were making such observance of this festival as we thought desirable, Christmas Day was being kept in the Eastern churches. The Oriental Christians have so great a repugnance to anything that wears the appearance of dictation by a Pope, that they have never accepted the Gregorian Calendar. Hence on that day Christmas was being observed in those places, the names of which fill the newspapers and touch our hearts with many anxious thoughts—Constantinople, Bulgaria, Athens, Montenegro, and "round about unto Illyricum." I remember well, long ago, in Athens, being in the midst of the Christmas celebration, when I knew that Christmas Day at home was twelve days past. And here I cannot help quoting what has both charmed and amused me in looking over a Greek Service-book which I brought with me from that city. In the "Anthologium," the Epiphany, or, as it is there termed, the Theophany, occupies a large space; and I find there two Greek iambics, the sense of which is as follows:—"One Swallow does not make a spring; but these three Swallows from the East make the spring of all pious souls."

The second old association of the Epiphany, which is worthy of being remembered, is that it is Twelfth Day. That phrase used to be far more common in England than it is now; and many curious customs were connected with it. With the festivities of Twelfth Night we have here nothing to do. But we should not forget that at this time the Lord Mayor of London, with the Aldermen, used to go to St. Paul's to hear a sermon. This is named as an ancient observance in Queen Elizabeth's reign; and it is probable that on these occasions Latimer sometimes warmed the hearts of the people, when the snow was cold on the pinnacles and high gables of old St. Paul's, which was a building very different from that which we see on the same site now. And another custom still survives. At the Royal Chapel of St. James's Palace, gold, frankincense and myrrh are even now pre-

¹ Rom. xv. 19.

sented. Before the illness of King George III. the monarch himself used to go, with heralds and Knights of the Garter, Thistle, and Bath, all habited in the grand robes of their Orders.

Whatever we may think of such celebrations as these, there is no doubt that the spiritual aspects of the Epiphany deserve our thoughtful attention. What view are we to take of the exact meaning of this sacred season? How are the clergy to make the most of it, for themselves and for their flocks? What are they to teach their people as to the significance of this festival and its profit? It is the purpose of this paper to invite the answering of such questions. I have said that the Epiphany season is inadequately observed among us; and for this it is easy to give more reasons than one.

In the first place, there is a certain prevalent vagueness in our apprehension of its meaning. This will probably be admitted by most persons. Our thoughts are as definite as possible on Easter Day or Whitsun Day, on Christmas Day or Ascension Day; but this is not quite the case with most of us in the commemoration of the Epiphany.

The Collect furnishes us with very little help. It always seems to me that the Collect for the Epiphany is the least satisfactory in the whole Prayer Book. In several instances these wonderful prayers have gained considerably in their translation from the Latin, and in their modification for our use. In this case, however, the fact is quite the contrary. There is no charm in the liturgical use of the word "fruition." Probably our country people enter into its meaning as little as into the meaning of the phrase "happy retribution" in a hymn, which used recently to be very popular. But in two respects we have really lost much in the English rendering of the Collect for the Epiphany. In the original there is a contrast between *faith* and *sight* which exactly fits the occasion, and which we can ill afford to spare; and there is great force and beauty in the "perducamur," which is the concluding word of the Latin Collect, and which expresses that patient following of Divine guidance which is part of the lesson of the Festival. These two latter circumstances have been well pointed out by Dean Goulburn in his recently-published book on the Collects. It should be added that the same thought is present also in the Latin word "usque."

One reason, perhaps, of our disregard of the Epiphany is that we are apt to view it simply as the commemoration of the visit of the Wise Men from the East to our Saviour in His infancy. Not that we are indifferent, taking the matter thus, to the charm of this incident, or to its instructiveness. We feel all its poetry and wonder; we know how it interests children; we are aware that a series of Christmas pictures would be very

incomplete without it. Moreover, we can easily draw from the occasion very useful teaching for ourselves. We see in the offerings of the Wise Men

Sacred gifts of mystic meaning :
Incense doth their God disclose,
Gold the King of kings proclaimeth,
Myrrh His sepulchre foreshows.

Or we may take the lesson in another way, and see in the Frankincense the adoration of the heart, in the Gold the devotion of our best gifts to God, and in the Myrrh the mortifying of our corrupt nature. These, however, are only allegorical applications of a historical event. The occasion does not seem to concern ourselves, or the present Church at large, very closely. We hardly see why this incident should be made the ground of a great commemoration, marking out separately one of the prominent Christian seasons. And, indeed, the observance of Epiphany was not originally separate from that of Christmas. It is not till the fourth century that we find it fully established as a self-existent festival. And here a remark may be permitted which has a general bearing on the arrangement of Church seasons, as well as a particular reference to the festival under our present notice.

It is quite according to the analogy of Church history, if sacred seasons acquire their recognized place and distinctive meaning gradually. At first the Epiphany, no doubt, had chief reference to the visit of the Wise Men to Bethlehem. But this visit was emblematic of something greater than itself; and as Christianity spread over the world from nation to nation, the thought of "the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles" acquired a larger meaning than before. The Church ought in this matter, as in other respects, to learn by experience. The mapping out of the territories of the Christian Year may be expected to make progress, and to become definite, in proportion as religious truths are realized. The appointment of Trinity Sunday, for instance, came late, and was practically a crowning summary of the doctrines which had been taught through all the preceding seasons, from the festival of the Nativity to the commemoration of the Descent of the Holy Ghost. So with the ultimate disengaging of the Epiphany from Christmas-tide. Of course, there are limitations to this view of the subject. All religious celebrations must be in harmony with the truth and are liable to be corrected by Holy Scripture. A consecrated season may propagate and deepen error as well as truth. Few of us in England would wish to adopt the feelings which are prevalent in France regarding the 15th of August; and it is with good reason that we have abolished the observance of Corpus Christi Day, which could not hold its ground co-ordinately with the

Twenty-Eighth Article. But in the case before us the larger the development, and the more definite the meaning, we give to the phrase, "the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles," the closer we are in sympathy with the whole spirit of the New Testament.

We at once perceive that to regard the Epiphany as the mere commemoration of the visit of the Wise Men to Bethlehem is far too limited a view of the matter, when we note the description of the festival given in connection with the Collect. It is there set before us as "the Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles." Yet here again we fail to mark the rich significance of the phrase. For a different reason from the former the Epiphany hardly exerts its legitimate action upon our feelings. The blessings which we are accustomed to, and of which we have never been destitute, fail to attract our notice simply because we are used to them. The daylight, which is given to us daily, inasmuch as the sun rises every day, is seldom made in our hearts a ground of conscious thankfulness and praise. And so it is with this gracious large Epiphany of the Gospel—this free and full "manifestation" of religious truth to the Gentiles. There never was a time when we knew any other religious dispensation. We are only acquainted through history with the barriers—national, local, social, ceremonial barriers—which of old divided Hebrew life and Gentile life in the matter of religion. So we forget our greatest blessings for the very reason which makes them the greatest—namely, that they are common and customary—and thus it is that we fail to appreciate the rich meaning of this season of the Church, through which we are now passing, between Christmas-time and Lent.

The Epistle for the day of the Epiphany (Eph. ii. 1-12) is well adapted to correct this state of mind, to quicken our perception of the rich largess of blessing which has been bequeathed to these Christian ages, in comparison with the restrictions, hindrances, and comparative darkness which prevailed in the ages that preceded them, and to feel how worthy this great revolution is to be annually commemorated. Here we see St. Paul, with the amplest exuberance and utmost variety of language, pointing out that his very mission to the world was the manifestation of a great truth which was altogether unknown, and could not be known, to the world before—namely, that all the religious barriers which had previously divided man from man, nation from nation, Hebrew from Gentile, were now absolutely gone, and that all were now on equal terms, all equally acceptable, all equally blest, in the daylight of God's revelation. And, as his manner is, to give force to his teaching on a great subject, he borrows a word, a most remarkable word—the word "mystery"¹—from

¹ In the short selection for the day this word occurs three times, as the word "Gentiles" occurs three times.

one of the institutions of the Heathen world in which his Missionary work was cast. The introduction of this epistle into the first English Prayer Book has struck the clear key-note of the full meaning of this festival. It would indeed be altogether unjust to say that there had been previously no apprehension of the large doctrinal significance of the Epiphany. In the Roman Breviary we find, under the rules for this season, extracts from those two chapters of Isaiah, the fifty-fifth and sixtieth, which, since 1549, have been lessons for the season in the English Church. Still, previous to the Reformation, the pilgrimage to Bethlehem was the predominant topic of this festival; and it is interesting and instructive to note that, with our habit of more careful biblical study, and with our enlarged responsibility for missionary work in the world, there has come a more distinct and more comprehensive understanding of the meaning of the festival which is now before our thoughts.

Yet, here again, even with this luminous Epistle before them, most men are at a disadvantage, and for a new reason fail to appreciate the full significance of the Epiphany. It requires some knowledge of history and some careful study of language to enable us to understand the whole force of the Apostle's warm and eloquent appeal. It is in questions of this kind that we are conscious of our obligations to men of learning and to scholars; and all the helps they furnish to us in such cases ought to be diligently used. As to historical facts, however, the Bible itself, if we give attention to it, will supply us with information enough to make the case very clear. The Bible is pre-eminently a historical book, and we can read history in it, as well as employ history for its illustration.

What we have to observe is, that when Christ was born at Bethlehem, the Hebrew and Gentile worlds were fenced off, one over against the other, by *double* barriers. Each of these sections of the human family built against the other a fence constructed of prejudice and antipathy, strengthened by custom and observance. These barriers were, as I have said, national, local, social and ceremonial. This point might be illustrated copiously from Heathen literature. Here it is enough, if we take under each head, simply and briefly, part of what we find in the Bible itself.

And first, there was the separation caused by *national feeling*. To realize how strong this was on the Hebrew side, we have only to call to mind many familiar expressions distributed all through the Book of Psalms. And it is not difficult to find traces of the same feeling on the *other* side—*i.e.* of the Gentiles toward the Jews. "What do these feeble Jews?" was the language of the Persian officials when the Hebrews

under Nehemiah were rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.¹ It is easy to detect here the feeling of national antipathy. And to take one instance from the New Testament, and thus to pass from the Persian Empire to the Roman, when a disturbance was made at Philippi in consequence of the preaching of Paul and Silas, and they were brought before the magistrates, the exclamation was, these men "*being Jews to begin with*"—for that is the correct translation—"do exceedingly trouble our city."² And to turn again to the feeling entertained on the Hebrew side (for I am anxious to mark the fact that a barrier was erected on both sides, and on this side, to a certain extent, with Divine sanction), we find our Lord Himself, though about to abolish all these differences, urging this state of mind as a ground of appeal: "After all these things do the Gentiles seek."³ We find the Jews, in their animosity against the Lord, saying on one occasion: "Will he go to the dispersed among the Gentiles and teach the Gentiles?" St. Paul, too, knows very well the sentiment with which he has to deal when he writes: "We also are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles." This feeling was, as I have said, in the course of God's mysterious dispensations, in some degree authorized on the Jewish side. But when Christianity came there came a vast power which changed all this. There came a holy revolution. All nationality in religion is now utterly extinguished. No enlightened person now holds this exclusive principle as a theory, however much it may try to assert itself in practice. We know perfectly well that every human being, of every nation, is equally welcome to the Gospel. There is no argument in this, be it observed, against national churches; on the contrary, the fact that Christianity is capable of being made national in any country whatever is one of the proofs of the point before us. No power could have taken the Jewish religion, in its completeness, away from Jerusalem, and made it national in London. Remove Judaism from Palestine, and it would not be Judaism in its completeness at all.

This brings us to the second barrier—the *local* barrier—in the matter of religion, which existed in force at the time of the founding of Christianity. We know how this was, and by a Divine authority for a time, in the preparatory stage of the world's history, among the Hebrews. "This is God's hill, in which it pleaseth Him to dwell," is a sentiment, not rebuked, but sanctioned. We forget, however, that the same was the case among the Gentiles. Localized religion was, in that preparatory time, equally characteristic of the Heathen world. The Acts of the Apostles will supply us with illustrations, if we read

¹ Nehem. iv. 2.² Acts xvi. 20.³ Matt. vi. 32.

that book carefully. When the poor heathens of Lycaonia wished to offer sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, the officiating priest is termed "the priest of Jupiter before the city." There was a local temple of Jupiter at Lystra, and the divinity was supposed to be something more there than he was elsewhere; and what was true of Lystra was true, more or less, of all the heathen cities which St. Paul visited. The most marked instance is that of Diana and Ephesus. The chief enthusiasm of the place, its local pride, its profit and fame, were bound up with the local divinity of the place. "Great is Diana of the Ephesians"¹ was like a war-cry in times of excitement. Nor are these the only instances which we find, if we bring classical knowledge to bear upon the Book of the Acts. "Castor and Pollux," who gave the name to the ship which took St. Paul from Malta to Puteoli,² were patron-deities of travellers by sea. When it is said that he saw Athens "wholly given up to idolatry,"³ the meaning is that it was full of the tokens of such local worship, the presiding goddess being represented by a lofty statue, with a spear, on the top of the Acropolis, so as to be visible at sea beyond Cape Colonna. Now all this localizing of religion, with its inevitable rivalry and separation, is by Divine authority gone. It is a great principle of Christianity that, to quote one of the Hebrew books, "the God of the hills is the God of the valleys."⁴ No doubt the old habits of thought have a tendency to come back and reassert themselves. The localizing of religion has been common enough through the Christian centuries. Human nature finds it very difficult to disentangle itself from the ancient rudimentary notions in such matters. Ideas belonging to the Jewish temple are often applied to Christian churches, in spite of the teaching of the New Testament,⁵ which sets *spiritual* realities before us as the antitypes of the past.⁶ It might seem rather harsh to say that the cry "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" has sometimes found an echo in Christian times; but often we hear words equivalent to "This is God's hill, in which it delighteth Him to dwell," used as though they expressed now a truth of the Gospel. In the teaching, however, of the New Testament—in the Gospel as preached by the Apostles—all this is swept away. "He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second."

But, in the next place, there was a *social barrier* erected between the domestic life of the Jews and the domestic life of the Gentiles, which prevented the existence of one comprehensive religion for all the world. Even long before the time of Christianity, even before the giving of the Mosaic Law itself,

¹ Acts xx. 28.

² Acts xxviii. 11.

³ Acts xvii. 16.

⁴ 1 Kings xx. 28.

⁵ See John iv. 21; Acts vii. 48; xvii. 14.

⁶ See 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; vi. 19. 2 Cor. vi. 16. Rev. xxi. 22.

this kind of hindrance to union was in force. "The Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews: for that was an abomination to the Egyptians."¹ The great illustration, however, to which the mind naturally turns is that furnished by the history of St. Peter and Cornelius. This very hindrance is a turning point in the narrative of the first great Gentile conversion. It required a special vision, and a very careful spiritual training, before Peter could see that this barrier was now gone. It was not till the further disclosures at Cæsarea were made that the whole truth flashed into this Apostle's mind: "Now of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him."² How deeply this view of an imperative social separation was ingrained in the Jewish mind we see from what the other Apostles said when they called Peter to account for what he had done at Cæsarea: "Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them."³ It must be sorrowfully admitted that this great evil of social religious separation exists to this day in the East on a vast scale in the form of caste, and may exist there for a long period still. But yet we may say, and we must say, that Christianity has come into the world as a magnificent power which in the end will do away with these distinctions. The true religion of Christ does not recognize their existence.

There remains one barrier more—a barrier erected on both sides—that of *separate ceremonial worship*. All the associations of the Jewish Temple service—the killing of animals, the streams of blood, the dead carcasses, the burning of flesh in fire—all this has so completely passed away from our minds, that we find it extremely difficult to realize it. We can hardly even conceive what it was like. Yet all this existed once; and it made an absolute division between the Jews and all other nations. And we must remember that over against this there was a sacrificial system among the Gentiles also, with its blood, its altars and its priests; and the repugnance which every pious Jew must have felt towards such ceremonies we can infer from a sentence written by St. Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians: "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with demons."⁴ In that passage he is speaking of the Lord's Supper; and without pursuing further this question of Temple-sacrifices, whether Jewish or Heathen, I will simply name a ceremony, which, though religious, was domestic; and I will ask my readers to contrast, in the light of the Epiphany,

Gen. xliii. 32.

² Acts x. 34, 35.³ Acts xi. 3.⁴ 1 Cor xi. 20.

the Passover and the Lord's Supper. The one was exclusive in the most emphatic sense; the other is, in the strongest sense, inclusive. The former asserted the absolute ceremonial separation of the Jews from the rest of mankind; the latter proclaims that in Christ all are one. The bread which we break, "is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread."¹ The mere institution of this sacrament may most truly be said to be a "manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles:" for all meet here on equal terms, the Gentile and the Hebrew, the master and the slave, the negro and the white man. Those who are different in everything else are alike here. In the institution of the Eucharist the Saviour has for ever thrown all these differences far away into the forgotten past.

By following steadily this line of historical thought we reach a point from which we can survey the full glory of the Epiphany. A large illustration of this part of the subject could easily be obtained from classical literature, but what has here been selected from biblical sources is enough for our present purpose. In our ecclesiastical year a light is thrown forward, as it were, from Christmas through the Epiphany season, and a shadow thrown back from the season of Lent, the meeting-point of the two being Septuagesima Sunday. It is highly desirable that we should appreciate the significance of the ecclesiastical place in which we are at this moment; and we can gain this advantage by a careful study of history.

But in order to master the whole case we must have recourse, not simply to the historian, but to the philologist. Reference was made above to St. Paul's employment of the word "mystery," which appears profusely in connection with our subject in the Epistle to the Ephesians,² as well as in that to the Colossians,³ and at the close of the Epistle to the Romans.⁴ After his manner he draws an image from one of the institutions of the society in which he is moving. Just as in writing to Corinth he draws metaphorical language from the Greek games at the Isthmus, or as in writing to the Asiatic Churches he establishes and strengthens his meaning by allusions to such architecture as was seen in the temple of the great goddess Diana, or as when in writing from Rome his imagery is suggested by the armour of the imperial soldiers, whom he saw daily; so it is in the present instance. In the various places which he visited he found "mysteries" an established institution. Probably at Ephesus and in Asia Minor generally such observances of secret societies (for so we may term them) were common. Certainly the practice of "curious arts" meets us prominently in the

¹ 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

³ Col. i. 26, 27; ii. 2; iv. 3.

² Eph. i. 9; iii. 3, 4, 9; vi. 19.

⁴ Rom. xvi. 25, 27; see 1 Tim. iii. 9.

account of St. Paul's work in that region. But the "great mysteries," as they were called—the most famous of all—were at Eleusis, by which place he certainly passed on one of his journeys at least between Athens and Corinth.

The essential feature of a "mystery" was this, that to some by initiation all became light, which was absolutely dark to others. The word denotes not a secret, but the revelation of a secret. In the use of the word, as to whether it denotes obscurity or illumination, all depends upon whether the reference is made to the initiated or the uninitiated. Now in St. Paul's use of it he always has reference to the former. This can be easily ascertained by an examination of the various contexts in which he employs the term. It is quite similar to that one place in the Gospel history where we find it used: "Unto you it is given to *know* the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." The whole stress is laid on the communication of light, without any reference to the fact that in all our religious knowledge much remains dark.

We shall catch St. Paul's meaning better if we observe in what senses the word "mystery" is *not* used by him. And in the first place, it is obvious enough that this Scripture language has nothing in common with those mystery-plays, such as the scenic representation of sacred things at Ober-Ammergau, which were common in the Middle Ages. Yet it is for three reasons quite worth while just to touch this usage of the word. First, it is very easy to understand how it arose; next it is the opinion of learned men that the heathen mysteries of the ancients were more or less of this character; and thirdly, this very history of the visit of the Wise Men was a frequent subject of mystery-plays. Such plays, including this very subject, were acted in the city of Chester at a period much later than is commonly supposed.

It is more important to note that "mysteries," in St. Paul's language, never mean sacraments. Often as he employs the term, there is no trace of such a reference in any single instance. It is indeed true that the word "mystery," like the word "sacrament" itself, did at an early date become used ecclesiastically for the appointed ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They were co-ordinate terms in the East and West for these holy ceremonies. And it is very easy, too, to understand how this terminology arose. It is most interesting also to find in our Prayer-Book side by side "this holy sacrament," derived from the oath of the Roman soldiers, and "these holy mysteries,"

¹ It is a remarkable coincidence that St. Paul twice uses the phrase "great mystery."

² Matt. xiii. 11; Mark iv. 11; Luke viii. 10.

derived from the secret societies of the Greeks. In strict analogy too with this language we speak in our Baptismal Service of the sanctifying of water to the "mystical" washing away of sin. A good illustration of the use of this language in the earlier Oriental Church may be adduced from Chrysostom,¹ who says in his interpretation of the water and blood which issued from the Saviour's wounded side: "They that are initiated (*ὁ μυσταγωγούμενος*)¹ know that they are regenerated by the water, and fed by the blood and flesh; and hence the mysteries (or rites of initiation—*μυστήρια*) have their origin." We are not concerned here with any questions arising out of Chrysostom's language or opinions upon these subjects. Such a passage is of considerable value to us, both because it illustrates part of the history of the word under our present consideration, and partly because it furnishes a comparatively late testimony in favour of our English view of the exclusive honour with which, among all sacred ordinances, we ought to regard Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

It may be observed at the same time, by the way, that the word "mystery" and the word "sacrament" were curiously co-ordinated in another respect, in that they were popularly and loosely applied to things religious of various kinds. Nor ought we to forget, while considering this verbal question, how largely the Greek language was spoken in the West during the earliest ages of Christianity. The easy interchange of the words "mystery" and "sacrament" is illustrated in the Vulgate. In the passages where St. Paul uses the Greek word, the two terms in the Latin translation are most singularly interchanged.

Once more. It is of the utmost importance to mark that when the Apostle employs this term he does not employ it in our modern popular sense. When in conversation we speak of anything as being a "mystery," we mean that it is obscure and dark and hard to be understood. It is on this point that we lay the chief stress. But with St. Paul's theological use of the term it is precisely the contrary. He lays the chief stress on brightness, illumination and the informing of the understanding. In this language he does not tell us that religious truth, though partially revealed, is very dark after all; but he tells that what was once altogether hidden is now openly revealed. It is not so much the revelation of a mystery with which we have in these passages to deal, as that the word "mystery" itself denotes revelation. Just as St. Paul elsewhere represents himself as a priest, offering up converted heathendom as a sacrifice to God, so in these passages he speaks of himself as a hierophant of

¹ Hom. lxxxv. on Is. xix. 34. The passage is given in Suicer's useful article on *μυστήριον*.

Eleusis, going everywhere to initiate the world. He is a "steward of the mysteries of God,"¹ and his duty is to keep them safe and to dispense them to all; and these mysteries are the cardinal truths of the Christian religion. "Great is the mystery of godliness: God manifest in the flesh, *preached* unto the Gentiles, *believed on* in the world."² This is the mystery or revelation of Christmas. "Behold, *I shew you* a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."³ This is the mystery or revelation of Easter. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church⁴ This is a great mystery: but I *speak* concerning Christ and the Church." This might be termed the mystery or revelation of Whitsuntide. In all these cases we observe that it is revelation or illumination in which he exults and teaches us to exult.

But nowhere is his language so luminous and full as when he speaks of the mystery or revelation of the Epiphany. At first sight we might be surprised by this fact. But if we call to mind the historical circumstances that have been named above, and if, taking these as our starting-point, we give a little play to our imagination, we shall cease to wonder that he felt a special exultation in the breaking down of the old barriers, and in the consciousness that the full Gospel now may have "a free course and be glorified." This mystery in one sense includes all other mysteries, because it is the assurance that all the world is welcome to the whole.

Now, therefore, a few concluding words may be said on the practical bearings of the question. It was asked at the beginning how we, the Clergy, are to help our people to get a definite view of the subject, so as to be edified thereby; and some of the right answers to this question are as follows.

We ought to expound the meaning of the word "Epiphany" itself. It is a most beautiful and glorious word, denoting light "shining upon" that which would otherwise be dark. If we take a Greek concordance in order to search for this noun and its corresponding verb, we find that out of the ten instances of their use in the New Testament, six are in the Pastoral Epistles. The sentence which fills the space from the eleventh to the thirteenth of the second chapter of the Epistle to Titus is a good text to preach on, so far as the word is concerned; and the illustration of the word is quite enough to fill a sermon.

But in preaching we should likewise explain the word "mystery." We should show what it means, we should point out how peculiarly it is a part of St. Paul's phraseology,⁵ how con-

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 1. ² 1 Tim. iii. 16. ³ 1 Cor. xv. 51. ⁴ Eph. v. 25, 32.

⁵ The three places where it occurs in the Gospel are really one. It is found four times in the Book of Revelation. St. Paul uses it twenty times.

sistent he is in the use of it, with what a powerful hand he wields the imagery it contains, and how the people of his own day would certainly understand his meaning. There must be a resolute disentangling of the Scriptural use of the word from other uses, or we shall mislead our people. We must see that we ourselves understand its meaning, and must be willing to give up mistakes to which we may have been accustomed. We must tell our people that, as they have been baptized, so they have been *initiated* into Christian truth, and that in this truth they must seek ever clearer and clearer illumination, must "go on unto perfection."¹

Once more, we must instruct our flocks in the facts of the case, as they are historically, contrasting what used to be with what is. We must point out what a prodigious difference there is between the condition of the world—as to freedom and fulness of revelation, as to comprehensiveness and facility of union—now and in the reign of Tiberius, not only because we have Christianity as a fact, and because the Christian Church exists, but because our religion is different in kind from the religion of those days—that it is not exclusive, not local, not fenced off by barriers; but free, expansive, universal, Catholic.

With all this comes the sense of responsibility, and that in several respects. First, there is the responsibility of maintaining a thankful heart for so boundless a blessing. The simplest homeliest words express most fitly the greatness of our obligation :

Not more than others we deserve,
Yet God hath given us more.

The Almighty Father fixes the limits of the habitation of men and the time of their living. We have been appointed to live in the illuminated era of the world. The light is free and full upon our pathway. Our case, historically, compared with the case of those who lived in ancient days, when the mystery really was a secret, is like that of the Israelites: "It was cloud and darkness to them, but gave light by night to these."²

Next, there is the responsibility of maintaining a charitable mind. We shall surely not be wanting in this, if we have caught the true spirit of the Epiphany. In the Sermon on the Mount one of the arguments presented to us for maintaining a spirit of kindness and forbearance towards all, and for readily pardoning our enemies, is this, "that we may be the children of our Father which is in heaven: for He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good." This is the radiant lesson of the very dispensation under which we live. If we are conscious of this mercy, we cannot foster a grudging, narrow, exclusive, habit of mind.

¹ Heb. vi. 1.

² Exod. xiv. 20.

And a wider responsibility still is inculcated by the Epiphany. This season is an eloquent exhortation to missionary zeal and enterprise. It tells us that we must go, like St. Paul, to initiate all the world. The day of secrecy is gone. The holy beneficent illumination is for all. "The darkness is past: the true light now shineth." If our Christianity is according to this great truth, the desire for missionary progress must be ever present with us; and we must long that our native country, its institutions, its tone of thought, the character of its people (alas! that this should be so imperfectly the case) may be "as manifestations of Christ to the Gentiles."

Finally, there is our personal responsibility. If we are true Christians, then a correct description of our life is precisely this, that it is a "manifestation of Christ" to those who are leading heathen lives around us. That many are leading such lives is too palpable. Our anxious desire must be that the light, where-with we have been illuminated, may shine upon them, so that they too may be "light in the Lord." When following such trains of thought as these, we often find our way back again to the Sermon on the Mount. "Ye are the light of the world. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

I regard the Epiphany as the Sunrise of the Christian Year. If we take this image vigorously into our minds—if we remember how the sun's rays, at its rising, dart everywhere, how they brighten all Nature, how they raise our spirits, relax the tension of anxious thought, invite us to cheerful views of life, to charitable feeling, to the active discharge of duty—then we shall realize what I have desired to express. The Epiphany "goeth forth from the uttermost part of the heaven, and runneth about unto the end of it again; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof."¹

J. S. HOWSON.

Reviews.

The Book of Psalms, with an Explanatory and Critical Commentary. By G. H. S. JOHNSON, M.A., F.R.S., Dean of Wells; C. J. ELLIOTT, M.A., Hon. Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, and Vicar of Winkfield, Berks; F. C. COOK, M.A., Canon and Precentor of Exeter, Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen. New and Revised Edition. Reprinted from the Speaker's Commentary. John Murray. 1880.

THE short Notice prefixed to this Volume explains with sufficient clearness the circumstances of its publication. The general interest which was excited by the Notes upon the Psalms which appeared in the fourth volume of "The Speaker's Commentary" called forth numerous

¹ Ps. xix. 6.