

tinued to exist in Babylonia down, at least, to the fourteenth century B.C., and submitted to the phonetic changes which passed over the rest of the language between that period and the epoch of Khammu-rabi. Yau-bani is a particularly interesting compound, as it proves that the divine name was thoroughly adopted into Babylonia, the compound being a specially Babylonian one. We might, however, have already gathered that such was the case from a lexical tablet. (83, 1-18, 1332, *Obv.* ii. 1), where the ideograph of 'god' is explained by the word Ya-h-u (with non-Assyrian *h*), for which the Babylonian scribe finds an etymology in the Babylonian *yāti* 'myself.' Similarly, Sargon writes indifferently Yau-bihdi and Ilu-bihdi in the name of a king of Hamath.

But the interest of the Nippur tablets does not end here. By the side of the masculine

Yaû we have also the feminine Yaûtum, corresponding with a Hebrew יהוה. And just as יהוה is used in Hebrew for the masculine, so we find Yaûtum used not only as a feminine but also as a masculine name. That is to say, the absorption of the feminine Yaûtum, יהוה, by the masculine יהו, יו, ייה, which is fully carried out in Hebrew, is in process of being carried out in the Babylonia of the Kassite age. How the goddess, who in so many cases possessed after all only a grammatical existence, came to be identified with the god, I have explained in my Lectures on the Religion of the Babylonians; a well-known example of the fact is the Ashtar-Chemosh of the Moabite Stone. While the Latin races, like the natives of Asia Minor, seem to have craved for a female divinity, the Semites resembled the Teutonic populations in their tendency to believe only in a male deity.

## The Great Text Commentary.

### THE GREAT TEXTS OF ST. LUKE.

LUKE II. 34, 35.

'And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the falling and rising up of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; yea and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.'—R.V.

#### EXPOSITION.

'Is set.'—Literally 'lies.' The metaphor is taken from a stone, which may either become 'a stone of stumbling' and 'a rock of offence' (Is 7<sup>14</sup>, Ro 9<sup>32, 33</sup>, I Co 1<sup>23</sup>), or 'a precious corner-stone' (I P 2<sup>7, 8</sup>, Ac 4<sup>11</sup>, I Co 3<sup>11</sup>).—FARRAR.

'For the falling and rising up of many in Israel.'—For the fall of many Pharisees, Herodians, Nazarenes, Gadarenes, and for the rising—a savour of life unto life—of all that believed on Him. In some cases—as that of Peter and the dying robber—they who fell afterwards rose.—FARRAR.

'For a sign which is spoken against.'—What was previously affirmed was His destination for others; now follows the special personal experience, which is destined for Him. His manifestation is to be a sign, a marvellous token of the Divine counsel, which experiences contradiction from the world (see on Ro 10<sup>21</sup>). The fulfilment of this prediction attained its culmination in the crucifixion; hence v. 35 (cf. He 12<sup>3</sup>). But it continues onward even to the last day (I Co 15<sup>25</sup>).—MEYER.

'Yea and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul.'—This is not a parenthesis; there is nothing in the construction to indicate that it is one, and a statement of such moment to the person addressed would hardly be introduced parenthetically. It is the inevitable result of the *ἀντιλογία* (speaking against): the mother's heart is pierced by the rejection and crucifixion of her son. τὴν ψυχὴν (*Soul*)—the seat of the affections and human emotions. *ῥομφαία* (*Sword*)—(1) a long Thracian pike; (2) a large sword, greater than μάχαιρα (22<sup>36, 38, 49, 52</sup>) or ξίφος. Such a weapon better signifies extreme anguish than doubt, the interpretation which Origen, Bleek, and Reuss prefer, as if she would be tempted to join in the ἀντιλέγειν (speaking against).—PLUMMER.

'That thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.'—Literally 'so that.' The sentence points to one result of the coming of Christ. Characters will be discovered by the touchstone of His presence.—ADENEY.

#### THE SERMON.

##### The Cross the Instrument of Self-Knowledge.

By the Rev. R. M'Cheyne Edgar, M.A.

After Simeon had sung the Nunc Dimittis he went on to tell Mary of the great future that was before her child. 'Behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel.' Yet the movement that He is to lead is not to be popular.

'Yea and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul.' Nevertheless, along with disaster there is to come judgment; the crucifixion is to reveal the thoughts of many hearts, it is to bring to light the secret dispositions and characters of men. The Cross is to be the great instrument of self-knowledge.

Many of us know much about science, about business, about the affairs of others, but little of ourselves—the most important study of all, the only one whose results remain for ever. There are two ways of examining ourselves—by the standard of the society in which we move, or by the standard of God. The former is the more general. There are prisoners, drunkards, bankrupts, and rogues of all kinds. We compare ourselves with them and are well pleased. But had we been in the same circumstances as they have been, would we have been any better? If we would see clearly and have the true state of our soul revealed, we must turn to the Divine standard—to the moral law. We need not bring our lives to the test of each of the ten commandments. They are summed up for us in the single word *love* to God above and man below. It is to the test of this love that we must bring our lives. Christ's Cross is the great revealer of the thoughts and hearts of men.

I. Christ crucified reveals the *universality of human depravity*. All those who surrounded Christ's Cross had injured Him. The holiest of all, His mother Mary, had interfered with His ministry (Jn 2<sup>d</sup>), and interrupted Him in His preaching (Mt 12<sup>47</sup>). His disciples, Nicodemus, Pilate, the Jewish rulers and people, all had wronged Him. And to-day we also are wronging Him, if the thought of Him upon the Cross does not move us to penitence and great love.

II. Christ crucified reveals the *intensity of sin*. Man's sin was so intense that the Son of God had to resist it even unto blood; under no milder means could the tide of evil be turned back. Let us all realize how exceeding sinful sin can be when the sacrifice of God's own Son was needed to resist it.

III. Christ crucified reveals the *ideal at which man should aim*. Where is manliness in its perfection if not when the man takes such an interest in his neighbours as to die to rescue them from their evils? Christ did not love His neighbour as Himself, but beyond Himself. It is towards this

ideal, the ideal of self-sacrifice, that we must rise.

#### Social Warnings from History.

*By the Very Rev. G. W. Kitchen, D.D.*

From the beginning Christianity has been a strife, and the keynote of it has been 'Set for the falling and rising up of many in Israel, and for a sign which is spoken against.' The rising is easily understood and the falling outside the Church. But the Church itself is continually falling. Let us look at some examples of this; picking out a few of the most important social warnings from history.

I. *Dwellers in caves*.—Christ called His followers the 'salt of the earth,' teaching them that they must always influence one another; yet not long after the death of the last of the apostles, a number of devout Christians made the mistake of thinking they could best get to heaven by becoming hermits. Christ went about doing good. Yet they, His followers, lived selfish lives, thinking only of their own souls. There are no hermits now, but there are those who have their spirit, men who forget Christ's message, Be not of the world, but always in the world.

II. *An established Church*.—Another social warning is afforded us by the Church in the time of Constantine. She attached herself to princes, which led to her immense influence, but at the same time to her great loss. She blessed war instead of peace, and relied on the support of the important men of the day, forgetting Christ's words, 'Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake the same shall save it.'

III. *The Church of France at the time of the Revolution*.—In the eighteenth century there were two kinds of clergy in the Church of France—sons of nobles who entered it to get all the pickings, and peasants who had the charge of the poor country parishes. The former were insincere, the latter were sincere but terribly ignorant. When they were called upon to answer the question, 'Has the Christian religion, as you know and understand it, power and life in it to mould the new elements of society in a way that shall be wholesome and permanent and good?' they were compelled to answer No, and when the revolution came their place was taken by Voltaire and Rousseau.

The Church should say to the people of England what Montrose said to Caledonia :

'I'll make thee famous by my pen  
And glorious by my sword.'

'Famous by my pen'—by persuading men of the truth ; and 'Glorious by my sword'—the sword of the spirit with which we smite with a good courage at the devil, and show ourselves the champions of the weak.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

'A sword shall pierce through thine own soul.'—The conflict between the mother's love and the mother's pride in her son's heroism is exemplified in the story told by Archbishop Alexander (*Witness of the Psalms*, p. 29). At the time of the Franco-Prussian War a French mother waited at the gates of Paris one day when the army was flocking through in flight before the conquering Prussians. An officer told her that the enemy were making no prisoners ; that her son, if ever he came back alive, must return that way before dark. She watched through the deepening shadows, and at last, as the night fell, turned homeward with a cry, 'Thank God, he did not run away !'

'THE Madonna of Raphael'—'Madonna della Sedia'—is from association and long familiarity especially dear to me. Its every line is perfect ; it is so good a thing that it never wearies nor vexes. The mother's enfolding arms, her hands clasped behind the little tender body, her knee, her bent caressing head, make a soft nest of comfort, a sacred enclosure into which no evil can come. The child yields himself to her love and protection, and is one with her, body and soul : in nearness to her are his joy and safety. The strong tenderness of affection was never more movingly depicted, its self-abandonment, its self-renunciation. She would save him from every ache and every mischance ; she would die for him : he is hers, she is his—and yet, oh, impotence of love ! She cannot avert one single pain ; she cannot shield him from a single grief ; she cannot make smooth the path that the bare baby feet must tread ; she cannot keep him in her sheltering arms. Oh, agony of love !—for, under the picture hangs a cross ! The rosy hands against her soft breast, the rosy feet that tread on air, shall be pierced with cruel nails ; instead of the mother's cheek pressed against his forehead, a crown of thorns shall pierce him ; instead of sweet tones whispered in the ear, the pitiless laugh, the mocking shout !—EDITH GITTENS, *Hibbert Journal*, July 1906, p. 871.

'Is set for the falling and rising up of many . . . that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.'—It is not only in the body of our Lord that God made for Himself a sign, which should thrust Him before the notice of the world. Wherever, now, the crucified Christ indwells, there is a manifestation of God. The Church invisible, which is the body of Christ, the Church of all who are 'one

in Christ Jesus,' is to-day in our midst a visible sign of God. Religious movements in which God obtrudes Himself upon our lives, reminds us of His claims on us, renews His offer of infinite resources for our uplifting,—these are the signs, the signatures of God. And wherever these have been, wherever the living God has thrust Himself forward on the notice of men, there have been the twin results following : on the one hand, moral and spiritual revolutions ensuing ; on the other, the 'revealing of the thoughts of many hearts. Take as a notorious example the Reformation in Germany. There was a religious movement bearing the obvious signature of God, witnessing to the obtruding Deity. What were its accompaniments ? Scarcely had Luther nailed his thesis to the door of the Wittenberg Church, when Germany, and then Europe, was covered with men doing one of two things : either falling before God in humble prostration, only to rise to newness of life ; or hurling in scurrilous literature and venomous speech volumes of gainsaying against God's sign. Either way, the thoughts of many hearts were revealed. And so has it been in every revival since, when God has a little more obviously than usual projected Himself upon the plane of men's lives. Roughly, these have been the consequences : conversion and gainsaying. . . . Times and again God thrusts forth a sign, and, behind it, looks out to judge.—G. A. JOHNSTON ROSS, *The Signature of God*.

'A sign which shall be spoken against.'—Justin Martyr mentions in his 'Dialogue' that the Jews not only anathematized the Christians in their synagogues, but also sent out chosen men from Jerusalem to acquaint the world, and particularly the Jews everywhere, that the Christians were an atheistical and wicked sect, which should be detested and abhorred by all mankind.

Tacitus describes them as holding a detestable superstition, and guilty of atrocious and shameful crimes ; Suetonius, as a race of men holding a new and criminal superstition ; and Lucian writes of them as those who had been taught to renounce the Grecian deities, and to worship their crucified Sophist.

They were generally represented as monsters of wickedness, guilty of the most atrocious and unnatural crimes, atheists, haters of mankind, cannibals, magicians, infanticides, and indulging in shocking impurities in their nocturnal assemblies.

'That thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.'—In the Talmud there is a legend of King Solomon which tells us that that king had a ring, on which was engraved the Divine name. Whenever he turned the engraved face of the ring towards a person, he was forced to speak out the exact thought which was in his mind. So Jesus, almost by His simple presence, forced men to reveal themselves, bringing to the surface their best and worst, and making that visible to themselves and sometimes to others.

#### FOR REFERENCE.

Bernard (T. D.), *Songs of the Holy Nativity*, 139.  
Brooke (S.), *The Spirit of the Christian Life*, 150.

Cox (S.), Expositions, 4th ser. 16.  
 Edgar (R. M.), The Philosophy of the Cross, 35.  
 Hall (E. H.), Discourses, 212.  
 Hare (J. C.), Sermons preached in Hirstmonceux Chapel, vol. i. 129.  
 Keble (J.), Sermons for the Christian Year. Lent to Passion-tide, 397.  
 Lawlor (H. J.), Thoughts on Belief and Life, 31.  
 Mantle (J. G.), The Way of the Cross, 19.

Oosterzee (J. J. Van), Year of Salvation, vol. ii.  
 Prynne (G. R.), Plain Parochial Sermons, 116.  
 Tholuck (A.), Light from the Cross, 9. 84.  
 Tuck (R.), Sermon Seed.  
*Lombard Street in Lent*, 12.  
*Selected Discourses from the French and German*, 315.  
*Sermons for the People, Epiphany to Quinquagesima*, 131.  
*Three Hundred Outlines of Sermons on the N.T.* (Clerical Library), 44.

## The Reading of Holy Scripture in Public Worship.

### I.

*By the Rev. J. Charteris Johnston, Torquay.*

CONFINING my attention to the point on which opinion mainly differs—whether the Scriptures should be read consecutively without regard to the sermon, or whether they should be chosen in harmony with the teaching that the sermon conveys, and the effect it seeks to produce—I declare myself emphatically in favour of the adoption of the latter course, and for the reason chiefly that in my judgment *unity is essential for the most profitable service*. People in general are far too much inclined to deal with religion in a mentally loose way, not caring particularly for harmonious and logical sequence in the service, provided only that it pleases them and gives them *some* degree of help.

But the minister of religion should make it his business to *train the mind* of his congregation as well as to interest and please them; and, moreover, he must aim to produce the deepest and most lasting impression possible. Without any doubt the sermon is, for the ordinary minister, his greatest opportunity of helping his congregation; and everything in the service should therefore so bear upon the subject-matter and aim of the sermon, that the preaching may be a great opportunity used to the very uttermost. Both my observation and experience warrant me in saying that the congregations in England that know the least of the real meaning of the Scriptures are the very congregations in which the Scriptures are read most slavishly in order, and in which the sermon is subordinated to what is called by way of distinction, 'the worship.' It always seems to me a

mistaken notion to make such a distinction between the sermon and the other parts of the service. It is the commonest of experiences that the sermon, in the hands of a man who is himself in vital communion with God, and knows and minds the preacher's great and solemn business, does more to beget true devotion in the congregational heart than all the other exercises of the service combined. In other words, both the preacher and the congregation are far more able and inclined to pray *after* the preaching than they were *before* it.

And a result of this kind cannot in reason be so *certainly* expected if the Scriptures themselves have not been chosen so that their reading has prepared the mind and heart of the congregation for the preacher's teaching, and has sanctioned it. It does not much matter that a selection of readings to suit the sermon may leave some portions of Scripture unread in the public services. Those that are thus left unread will naturally be the portions that are the least edifying, or altogether unsuitable for public reading. For, given a minister who is practically minded, and whose mind is also alert and modern, and his choice of sermon topics will be so varied, that in the course of time—probably in not much longer time than following a table of readings would secure—he will have read all of the Scriptures that it is profitable to read in public worship, with the incalculable advantage of having read nothing that is unprofitable, and of having made all his reading to give authority and influence to his preaching.

Nothing can be worse than to give the impression that all parts of Scripture are equally valuable for instruction and inspiration, and so to read