

THE
EXPOSITORY TIMES.

EDITED BY

JAMES HASTINGS, M.A., D.D.

VOLUME THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

OCTOBER 1913 - SEPTEMBER 1914.

EDINBURGH:

T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET.

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

WHO was the Pharaoh of the Exodus? Once more the question is asked. It is asked with new interest and new hope.

Only a year ago it was supposed to be as good as settled that the Pharaoh of the Exodus was Menepthah, and that the Pharaoh of the Oppression was Menepthah's 'masterful father,' Rameses II. But there were always some good Egyptologists who were unconvinced. And within the last six months they have had a powerful accession to their number in the person of Mr. H. R. HALL, of the Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities in the British Museum. In his book on *The Ancient History of the Near East* (Methuen), Mr. HALL puts the Exodus back to a date long before Menepthah and long before Rameses II.

'The view that the Exodus took place in Menepthah's reign has always,' says Mr. HALL, 'been open to the objection that not enough time was left by it for the period of the Judges. A late Hebrew tradition ascribed a length of four hundred and eighty years to this period. This tradition had to be ignored, and the period of the Judges reduced by one-half. Yet, in view of the total absence of any information from Egyptian or other contemporary sources concerning the Exodus, it was natural that the reign of

Menepthah should have been generally chosen as that of the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Rameses II. did very well for the Pharaoh of the Oppression, since he built largely in the Wadi Tûmilât, the Land of Goshen (as, for example, at Pithom), and "Pithom and Raameses" were the store-cities which, according to the Hebrew account, had been built by their ancestors under the pitiless lash of the Egyptian taskmasters. Menepthah, too, was a very weak successor to his masterful father, and after his time Egypt fell into a period of decline. All this was regarded as the result of the blow inflicted upon Egypt by the Exodus.'

But the continued study of the Tell el-Amarna tablets and the discovery of the 'Israel-stele' have had the result of shaking the confidence even of conservative investigators in the Menepthah theory.

In the first place, the word 'Isirail' in the stele cannot be anything else than Israel; it is certainly not Jezreel, as has been suggested, since a Hebrew *z* could never be reproduced by an Egyptian *s*, and it is not a place-name but a folk-name, being 'determined' by the sign of 'people,' not that of 'town.'

In the second place, it is difficult to account for the existence of Israelites in Palestine in the

triumphant victory over their oppressors, who outnumbered them by many thousands. That is the kind of performance we call a golden deed, and so here we have another part of the message of November. Endure hardness and you will become able to do a golden deed.

But history tells us that when the men and women of a nation show themselves of this spirit, they arrive at what is known as *The Golden Age*. When Peter the Great was Czar of Russia, he worked so hard and learned so much for the benefit of his people that the country made greater advances than it had ever done before. They call it the Golden Age in Russia.

The great time which put the British Navy in command of the seas was the time of Queen Elizabeth. Sailors like Raleigh and Drake endured every kind of hardship in order to bring glory to their native land. For that, among other reasons, Elizabeth's reign is known as England's Golden Age.

There is a favourite book of mine which is called

by this name, 'The Golden Age.' It tells of the happy days of childhood and youth with all their fun and laughter and brightness.

But, you may ask, what can there be for us in this message of November? Well, think of it this way. I have known of boys and girls being tempted in various ways, sometimes by others like themselves, sometimes by a voice inside. They were tempted to be disobedient or unkind or selfish—or in some way to do what they knew to be wrong. Now it is easy to do wrong, and hard to do right. You have to be brave and bold to refuse to yield to the tempter. Sin is often made to look so pleasant and enticing that it is difficult to say 'No.' But November comes round and it whispers, 'endure hardness.' Look at the golden flower; that is *its* motto. Make it *yours*, and you will be led on to do golden deeds,—and if you are always brave and truthful and obedient, your heart will be kept innocent and clean like that of Jesus, and so the days of youth will be for you The Golden Age.

The Importunate Widow and the Alleged Failure of Faith.

BY PROFESSOR THE REV. BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD, D.D., LL.D., LITT.D., PRINCETON.

It is quite usual to treat Lk 17²⁰–18⁸ as practically a connected discourse, divided into its parts, no doubt, but dealing with a single subject. There seems to be no sufficient ground for this. The whole material from 17¹²–18³⁰, it is true, belongs together as recounting incidents of the journey 'through the midst of Samaria and Galilee' on the way up to Jerusalem (17¹²). Some of the incidents recounted occurred also, as we know from Matthew and Mark,¹ in immediate sequence, though this is not notified in any case by Luke. Some of the paragraphs in this section, moreover, are internally connected by the common lesson which they inculcate;² and there is no intrinsic reason why

¹ Those recounted in 18¹⁵⁻¹⁷ and 18¹⁴⁻²⁰; cf. Mk 10¹⁷, Mt 19¹⁵⁻¹⁶.

² The teaching of the last three paragraphs, 18⁹⁻¹⁴, 15-17, 18-20, is alike to the effect that the Kingdom of God is a gift, not an achievement.

the three paragraphs which make up the section 17²⁰–18⁸ might not be similarly bound together. In point of fact it seems possible to trace in them a certain, if not exactly sameness, yet community of teaching; and this perhaps accounts for their preservation by Luke together. But on the face of them they give us three distinct utterances of our Lord, different alike in subject and in reference. The first of them, drawn out perhaps by a testing inquiry of the Pharisees, has to do with the Kingdom of God, and declares it either spiritual in its nature or a present fact in the world, according as we interpret its key-phrase, 'The kingdom of God is within—or among—you' (17²⁰, 21). The second treats of the 'days of the Son of man,' and declares them definitely in the future and not a thing the signs of the coming of which are anxiously to be watched for (17²²⁻³⁷). The theme of the third, as Luke expressly tells us in its

preface, is the necessity of persistent prayer (18¹⁻⁸). The Kingdom of God now present in men's hearts; the Second Advent to come unexpectedly in the undefined future; the necessity of perseverance in prayer: we could scarcely find three subjects of discussion which would seem more distinct. They appear to have in common only a tendency to withdraw the mind from engagement with the future and to focus it upon the duties of the present life.

Luke introduces the Parable of the Importunate Widow and the Unjust Judge without any intimation of close connexion with the preceding paragraph. He presents it only as a further item of Jesus' teaching at this general time. He says simply, 'And He spoke a parable to them. . . .' Even were the 'also' genuine, on which stress is sometimes laid as a proof of a close connexion here,¹—'And He spoke *also* a parable to them,'—that conclusion would not follow. The meaning would be only that Luke was adjoining this parable to what he had already recorded, as an additional item of Jesus' teaching.² Much less is a close connexion implied in the mere 'to them'—'And He spoke a parable *to them*'—as is also sometimes pleaded.³ This 'to them'—which no doubt could have been omitted (as at 13⁶)—merely intimates that the parable was spoken, like the item of teaching immediately preceding it, to the disciples rather than to the Pharisees, say (17²⁰), or any other special circle (18⁹). Nor is there anything in the contents of this paragraph to suggest a close connexion with that which precedes it. It has been argued, indeed,⁴ that it presents itself as the conclusion of the preceding discussion by showing that despite the delay in the coming of the Son of Man, intimated in 17²², the longing of those who are looking forward to it for the vindication of God's elect shall ultimately be gratified. But this rests on an interpretation of the application which Jesus gives the parable (vv. 6-8), which brings it into apparent conflict with its preface,⁵ which finds no point of departure for itself in the parable itself, and which does not seem in itself necessary or even indeed possible.

¹ *E.g.* by Godet and Göbel.

² On the frequency of *δέ καί* in Luke, see Plummer on 3¹.

³ *E.g.* by Plummer.

⁴ So, *e.g.*, B. Weiss; cf. Holtzmann.

⁵ Accordingly B. Weiss remarks: 'On this very account the reference which Luke gives it in v. 1 is much too general (against Meyer, Godet).' Cf. Holtzmann.

In introducing the parable Luke gives it a quite general reference. 'And he spake a parable unto them,' he says, 'to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint.' There is no intimation that this inculcation of perseverance in prayer has special reference to prayer for the Second Advent. It has the appearance, on the contrary, of being entirely generally meant. And with this general reference the parable itself perfectly accords. It presents simply a vividly drawn picture of persistency in petition, with the ultimate issue of its granting. If, then, the Lord in His application of the parable gives it a narrower reference, there is an appearance at least of conflict between His application of it and the announced reference of the parable, with which its substance accords. It is, of course, open to us still to say that in His concluding remarks our Lord does not intend to develop the whole teaching of the parable, but only wishes to apply its general lesson of importunity in prayer to the special case of the Second Advent. The language of these remarks, which is at their hinge-point derived directly from that of the parable, does not, however, encourage this interpretation of them. The fundamental question, in any case, remains whether these remarks are rightly read as applying the parable specifically to prayer for the Second Advent. They run, as they are given in our Revised Version, as follows: 'And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge saith. And shall not God avenge his elect, which cry to him day and night, and he is long-suffering over them? I say unto you, that he will avenge them speedily. Howbeit when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?' The passage bristles with difficulties. But there are some things about it which seem tolerably clear.

The phrase which is translated 'avenge,' is derived from the parable and must obtain its interpretation from it. There we read in our Revised Version that the widow's importunate demand took the form of 'Avenge me of mine adversary!' while the judge's meditation ran in the words: 'Because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her.' 'Avenge' is, however, an unfortunate rendering of the Greek phrase here, and pre-occupies the mind with wrong suggestions. What the widow was seeking was not fundamentally vengeance on her adversary, but rather relief from his oppressions. No doubt there was punishment

sought for the evil-doer, and no doubt punishment was inflicted upon him.¹ But punishment was not the main end aimed at or obtained; it was only the means by which the real end of relief and protection was secured. 'Ἐκδικεῖν,' comments Godet; 'to deliver (ἐκ) by a judicial sentence (δική). This term does not therefore include the notion of vengeance, but that of justice to be rendered to the oppressed.' More exactly still, Plummer paraphrases: 'Give me a sentence of protection from; vindicate my right (and so protect me) from.' He proceeds to quote in support Schleusner's 'Assere me jure dicundo ab injuriâ adversarii mei,' and comments thus: The ἀπό 'does not express the penalty exacted from the adversary, but the protection afforded from him, as in ῥῆσαι ἡμῶς ἀπὸ τοῦ ποναροῦ. The meaning is "preserve me against his attacks," rather than "deliver me out of his power," which would require ἐκ.'² Precisely the thing the widow demanded; and precisely the thing the judge tardily granted her, was accordingly protection.³ When then our Lord, taking up this phrase in a somewhat more emphatic form of expression,⁴ declares, in His application of the parable, that God will 'avenge his elect,' He must be understood not so much as proclaiming the certainty with which the divine vengeance will be visited at the last day upon the oppressors of His people, as giving a gracious assurance to them of the unfailing protection of God amid the evils which assault them in this life.⁵

¹ This should satisfy Jülicher's remark (ii. p. 279), that 'the afflicted widow does not merely wish to be quit of her adversary, like the man in 12⁸⁰; she demands ἐκδίκησις, that vengeance should be wreaked on him, he should be punished. . . .'

² Similarly Göbel, and Weizsäcker; cf. J. Weiss. Plummer's comment rests partly on Trench's, whose paraphrase is: 'Or, since men go not to a judge for vengeance, but for justice—Do me right on, deliver me from the oppression of, mine adversary.'

³ Hence James Moffatt, *The Historical New Testament*, 1901, translates: 'And she used to come to him, saying, "Grant me protection from my opponent"; 'Yet, since this widow disturbs me, I will give her protection.'

⁴ Jülicher says, 'more solemn.' Cf. Göbel's comment: 'It is self-evident that the fuller periphrastic form ἐκδικησίν τινος ποιεῖν must have just the same meaning as ἐκδικεῖν previously, vv. 3-5, therefore="to effect the deliverance of one suffering injustice."'

⁵ Alfred Loisy's rendering of the several phrases is notably close: 'Do me justice against my opponent'; 'I will do her justice'; 'Shall not God do justice to His elect?' Yet

There are not wanting indications in our Lord's further words which bring support to this conclusion. One of them is found in the clause rendered in our Revised Version, 'And he is long-suffering over them.' It is not easy to be perfectly sure of either the construction or the exact sense of this clause. Its office is in any case, however, to deny that God is indifferent to the sufferings of His people; and in its most natural interpretation it declares that as His ears are always filled with their cries He will not be slow to act in their defence.⁶ This declaration is immediately reinforced by the strong asseveration which follows upon the question, returning, with great energy of assertion, a decisive answer to both its inquiries: 'I say unto you, that he will avenge them'—that is, 'do them justice'—'quickly.' A great strength of emphasis falls here on the word 'quickly.'⁷ The outcome of the whole question and answer is thus the assurance that God will not—not merely leave His elect unavenged, but—be slow to rescue them from their distresses. He keeps an open ear to their cries and gives them quick deliverance.

It would certainly be difficult to refer so strongly stressed an assertion of the speediness of the even here there is lacking the implication that is strong in the Greek text that this doing of justice issues in relief and protection. Loisy's rendering is closely followed in the paraphrase of *The Twentieth Century New Testament*: 'Ask: g for justice against some one who had wronged her'; 'I will grant her justice'; 'Will not God see that His own chosen people who cry to Him night and day have justice done them?' Cf. Weymouth's *The New Testament in Modern Speech*: 'Give me justice, and stop my oppressor'; 'I will give her justice'; but in vv. 7, 8 'avenge.'

⁶ The right reading is certainly μακροθυμεῖ, and Godet gives in general the right meaning of that reading. Translate: 'And does He delay with respect to them?'—that is, in effect (Plummer remarks of μακροθυμῶ: 'It is almost synonymous with βραδύνω'): 'Is He slack concerning them.' Van Oosterzee comments admirably: 'With μακροθυμεῖ it is not the idea of forbearance in general, but delaying of help that is to be adhered to, and the second half of the question, v. 7, is, with Meyer, therefore, to be paraphrased: "And is it His way in reference to them to delay His help?" It appears from this that the first member of the question requires an affirmative, the second, on the other hand, a negative answer; and that the here designated μακροθυμία stands directly in contrast with the ἐκδικ. ποιεῖν ἐν τάχει which (v. 8) is promised in the most certain manner.' Jülicher (p. 287) agrees in general with this interpretation, and cites for it already Clement of Alexandria, and among the moderns B. Weiss, Steinmeyer, Stockmayer, Weizsäcker, Holtzmann, Nösgen, and, for the main matter, Göbel.

⁷ Plummer: 'In any case the ἐν τάχει is placed last with emphasis.'

succour which God will give to His distressed children to the ultimate vindication which shall come to them at the Second Advent, along with the final confusion of all their foes. This would be a strong assertion of the immediate imminence of the Second Advent, and an equally decisive reference of all the hopes of God's people in the mercy of God to that event. And that, to go no further, would read very oddly in immediate sequence to the paragraph 17²²⁻³⁷, the whole office of which is to teach that the days of the Son of Man are not immediately imminent, and to withdraw the minds of Christ's followers from too great engrossment with their coming. It may not be quite impossible to explain 'speedily' as meaning really 'suddenly'; and the resulting declaration may not be altogether inappropriate to the matter in hand: to promise the elect that the destruction which shall fall upon their oppressors at last shall fall upon them unexpectedly, may have some imaginative value in the way of comfort to them in their meanwhile unalleviated griefs. But all this is manifestly difficult. The term translated 'speedily' does not naturally mean 'suddenly.'¹ Knowledge of the unexpected suddenness with

¹ Jülicher (p. 286): 'The sense of "unexpected," "suddenly," is not established.' Göbel: 'The words can on no account mean the sudden occurrence of an event in opposition to one expected and prepared for.'

which destruction shall fall upon one's tormentors, when they are at length destroyed, goes but a little way towards removing the sufferings which must be meanwhile endured. And, then, we shall still have to reckon with the clause in the question which demands whether God is slow to act in the defence of His elect, to which this strong declaration, 'No, He shall act speedily,' is a response. No doubt a meaning may be found for this clause also, which would bring it into line with the reference of God's promised succour to the Second Advent. But even when that is done, there still remains the conflict of this whole interpretation with the expressed purport of the parable given in the preface, to say nothing of the general difficulty under which it labours of leaving God's people without promise of help in their sufferings here and now—and that, for any generation except that which shall itself witness the coming of the Lord, means nothing less than hopeless suffering to the end of their days. What requires consideration is the multitude of adjustments which need to be made in order to carry this interpretation through. An unlikely explanation of a single element in a statement might be endured. Each unlikely explanation added to this multiplies the difficulty of accepting the proposed interpretation. Can any interpretation survive so many unlikelinesses as are here accumulated?

(To be concluded.)

Recent Foreign Theology.

The Old and New Testament.

It is still possible for a man and a German to make a name for himself in the criticism of the Pentateuch. Pfarrer Johannes Dahse has done so. He rejects J, E, and P, those nameless and unknown individuals, and works upon the texts as they stand, beginning with the most recent editors and adapters and working back till he finds what he thinks is the Ur-Moses (if the expression may be permitted). His book, under the title of *Wie erklärt sich die gegenwärtige Zustand der Genesis*, is published in Giessen by Alfred Töpelmann (Pf.40).

Some things about the Synoptic Gospels are settled—their order, for example. But not their

sources. Dr. Walter Haupt has investigated the whole subject anew and has published his investigation under the title of *Worte Jesu und Gemeindeüberlieferung* (Hinrichs; M.7.50). He discovers three distinct sources of a primary nature which he calls Q¹, Q², Q³; and he describes the contents of each source. That, however, occupies only the first half of the volume. In the second half he shows how the Synoptic literature was built up gradually.

For the doctorate of theology in Marburg, Mr. C. H. Watkins wrote a thesis on St. Paul's conflict in regard to the Galatian Christians, and has now published it under the title of *Der Kampf des Paulus um Galatien* (Mohr). It is a work of unmistak-

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

WITH the issue of the sixth volume of THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS, the half of the work is published. Since the beginning one volume has appeared every year. What that means only those who have examined a volume carefully can tell. In every volume there are nine hundred pages, of from twelve to fifteen hundred words each, and every word has to be weighed before being committed to paper, for in such a work as this there must be a place for every word, and every word must be in its place. Then there is the reading of the manuscript and the verifying of every reference, quotation, and practically every statement it contains; the typing, re-reading, printing, and all the rest. This volume contains two hundred and sixty-six articles, written by a hundred and seventy-one authors. It is some evidence of the care taken to find the highest authority on every subject that no fewer than a hundred and twenty-eight authors have contributed but a single article to the volume.

Dr. Israel ABRAHAMS of Cambridge writes the article on 'Heresy' among the Jews. The difference between the Jewish and the Christian Church is very remarkable. The Talmud says, 'Once a Jew, always a Jew.' Consequently heresy was winked at, separation detested.

That curious lumber room, the 'Genizah,' is
VOL. XXV.—No. 3.—DECEMBER 1913.

opened to the eyes of all the world by Professor BACHER of Breslau. He tells the story of the finding of the Hebrew Ecclesiasticus in it, and promises more wonderful works than that. The treasures of the Cairo Genizah have been arranged in alphabetical order: almost every topic of interest to the student of the Bible will yet be enriched by it, including the text and translation of the Bible itself and the commentaries on it.

The vicar of Hilderstone in Staffordshire is an authority on ecclesiastical folklore. His article on 'Grace at Meals' will furnish material for much interesting conversation when Grace has been said. And, more important perhaps, it will suggest forms of Grace, not lengthier but much more appropriate and a little more reverent than those we sometimes hear in these days.

Professor BURKITT's article on the 'Gospels' brings our knowledge quite up to date. The differences between it and Professor BURKITT's own book, *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, published so recently as 1906, shows how clear is his appreciation of the issues, and how watchful he is of the least move made by another. 'The Gospel' itself, the evangelical message, is given by Mr. STRAHAN with quite unusual breadth and insight. The article is full of points for the preacher.

We should never be able to forget this month of December, if we thoroughly learned this lesson, and resolved that from now we should never stop climbing.

Think of all the things we should have to put under our feet in order to help us to rise. We sometimes encourage harsh and bitter thoughts. We give way to bursts of temper and passion. We say things that are unkind or even shameful. If we no longer allowed these any room in our life, but trampled them under our feet, each one would become a step of a ladder by which we should always be mounting higher. We should be growing every day more like the example that Jesus set before us in His own life. He put every sin under His feet, and so He was at the very top of the *Ladder of Life*.

You may be thinking that you could never climb so high as to come and stand beside Jesus, but He Himself says that that is what you are to aim at. You will have heard of the Pyramids of Egypt. They are great monuments of stone—the greatest in the world—and when seen from long distances, they appear as if no one could mount up them. But when you come nearer, you find the stones so placed that the way up is like a wonderful staircase.

The mighty pyramids of stone
That wedge-like cleave the desert airs,
When nearer seen and better known,
Are but gigantic flights of stairs.

Or you may be thinking of great men and women who have scaled the ladder of fame, till the whole world honours them. You may say to yourself, 'it would not be possible for me to get on so well.' But when you hear their story, you often discover that they had no better gifts and no greater opportunities than you, only, while others took their ease, they always kept on climbing.

The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they while their companions slept
Were toiling upward in the night.

Remembering all you have been taught about Christ—how good He was, how kind, how thoughtful for others—you say, 'I could never be like that. It is impossible for me.' Yet Jesus Himself says we can. To all who love Him, He says, 'Be ye perfect.' Now he would never tell us to be perfect if it were something quite beyond us to reach. We read in the Bible that if we love Christ with all our heart, then one day we shall be like Him. To be like Christ means that we shall have climbed to the very top of the *Ladder of Life*, and the month of December calls every one of us to keep on climbing.

The Importunate Widow and the Alleged Failure of Faith.

BY PROFESSOR THE REV. BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD, D.D., LL.D., LITT.D., PRINCETON.

II.

WE may take it as clear, then, that our Lord directs our eyes here not to the vindication which God's elect shall receive at the Second Advent, but to the constant succour which He gives them in the trials of their daily life. And this conclusion will be powerfully confirmed if we will permit His declaration to work upon us in its entirety, in its relation to the parable to which it refers. It does not bear the character of a special application of a general fact. It bears the character rather of the

enforcement of a great fact by a parallel instance. Only, the argument here is by contrast—not so much *ex similitudine* as *ex dissimilitudine*. What God is declared to do is not so much like what the judge is pictured in the parable as doing, as unlike it: and the contrasts are thrown up into the strongest emphasis. Over against the unjust judge, the righteous God is set. Over against the unjust judge's long delay in rendering his suitor justice, the swiftness of God in responding to the

cries of His elect is set. It does not appear that the widow had any personal claim upon the judge to whom she brought her case; it is intimated that God has a personal interest in those whose cries rise to Him—they are 'His elect.' The widow may have wearied the judge with repeated appeals; the cries of God's elect to Him are not merely repeated but continuous—they rise to Him unbrokenly day and night. The whole representation is *a fortiori* and it gathers force as it proceeds from its repeated enhancements. 'And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge says: and God—shall not *he* do justice to *his elect*, who cry to him *day and night*, and is he *slow* with respect to them? I say unto you that he will do justice to them *speedily!*' A wicked judge, the good God: a stranger suitor, God's own chosen ones: repeated demands, an unbroken cry: tardy justice, speedy succour. It is in this circle of contrasts that our Lord's declaration moves. And it is out of this series of contrasts that it must find its interpretation. How, for instance, should 'speedily' here not mean just *speedily*? How could the point of the remark be that God would postpone His intervention for the relief of His elect—until the judgment day?

This remark of our Lord's is not, then, 'eschatological.' It is not meant that it has no eschatological elements in it or is unconditioned by eschatological conceptions. It was the gospel of the Kingdom that our Lord came preaching, and there is no part of His teaching which is not at its core eschatological. Eschatological elements lie in the background of His most uneschatological declarations and may be continually detected in the perspective. In our present declaration, for example, we hear of 'God's elect,' and when we say 'God's elect,' we have already said eschatology: this is an eschatological conception. Though, therefore, our Lord is speaking here of God's hearing of prayer in general, and in that sense the saying is not 'eschatological,' it does not follow that as He speaks His thought is free from eschatological suggestions. We cannot be surprised, then, that a direct eschatological allusion crops out before He is done. 'Howbeit, the Son of man, when he comes,' He asks in concluding His enforcement of the lesson of the parable,— 'shall he find faith on the earth?' Even when He is speaking of the trials of His people in this life, and of God's open ear to their cries, He is

thinking no less of the term set to their evil days by His coming. During these days of distress His people are to live by prayer; through their prayers they shall obtain their relief. But afterwards—He comes; and this is the end of all. What will He find them doing when He comes to them to bring all their days of conflict to a close?

Precisely what our Lord means by this concluding question is, indeed, far from universally agreed upon. Of one thing, however, we may feel sure. He does not mean to assert, under the guise of a question, that all faith will have perished out of the earth before He comes again. And surely it would be even more impossible to suppose that He means to assert that faith will at least have almost perished out of the earth, or will have done so in great part, or, indeed, will have done so to any extent. There is no hint in His words of any such qualification of the catastrophe which He predicts—if He predicts any catastrophe. If our Lord's meaning is that faith will no longer be found on the earth when He comes again, it will be only right to take His assertion in its full meaning. But there is no reason to suppose He had any such meaning. Why should He, in the act of commending persistent prayer to His disciples and of promising God's unflinching and speedy help to His petitioning people in all their trials, suddenly turn to declare that after a while God shall have no people in the world to care for; that the cries that rise to Him now, day and night, shall cease; and that His whole rôle of prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God shall fall into abeyance? To ask whether the Son of Man shall find faith on earth when He comes—even if the form of the question suggests that an affirmative answer is doubtful¹—is, after all is said, something very far from asserting that it shall not be found.

In endeavouring to ascertain just what our Lord intends by the question, it may be well to begin by determining the sense which is to be put upon the term 'faith' here—or 'the faith,' we may say, since it has the article. On the face of it, it is clear that there is not meant by it the Christian religion; nor yet belief in Jesus as the Christ; nor yet the assurance that He will come again. Any one of these things the term might mean in a different context. But not here. Here it natur-

¹ Jülicher (p. 288): 'ἀρα no doubt, as in Ac 8³⁰, Gal 2¹⁷, indicating doubt of an affirmation.'

ally means that faith which sustains, and manifests itself in, persistent prayer.¹ This parable was spoken to inculcate the necessity of persistent prayer with unabating confidence. And, in His words of application, our Lord reasserts, with the greatest emphasis, the sure basis of this confidence in the character and purposes of God. It is naturally of this confidence that He continues to speak, when, in His closing question, He demands whether 'the faith'—the faith in question, the faith which He had been illustrating—shall still be found on the earth at His coming.

The question is, of course, a rhetorical one. Our Lord is not inquiring for information. But it is not, therefore, to be taken as a merely counterfeit one. Our Lord is not, in the form of a question, giving information. He neither expects to learn from His disciples, nor does He expect to teach them, by His question, whether such faith as He had been commending to them shall remain on the earth when He came again. His object is neither to elicit nor to communicate information: it is to rouse to effort. What He is aiming at is ethical impression. He wishes to encourage His disciples to preserve that attitude of confident trust in God which it is the purpose of the parable and all its accompanying words to inculcate. He, so to speak, in this final question 'puts it to' the disciples, whether 'the faith' of which He speaks shall be a permanent fact in the world. God's ears are ever open to the cries of His people: He is faithful. Are they, on their part, equally to be depended upon? If God is not like the unjust judge, are they like the importunate widow? Or will they, as she did not, fail? The design of the question is thus to incite the disciples to the preservation of the attitude of confident trust in God which it is the object of the parable to commend. And thus it takes its place as an essential part of the discourse, without which the discourse would not be complete. The parable was spoken with reference to the necessity of the preservation by the disciples of an attitude of persistent prayer. The discourse could not find its end therefore in an assurance of the faithfulness of God. The point is not what God will do. The point is what will the disciples do? Will they always pray and

¹ Godet: 'Not *some faith* in general, but *the faith*—that special faith of which the widow's is an image, which, in spite of the judge's obstinate silence and long apparent indifference, perseveres in claiming its right.'

not faint? What will the Son of Man find when history has run its course out to the end, and He comes again to take account of the ages? God certainly is and will continue to be faithful: will the disciples be faithful too? Not till the lesson of the parable is clinched by this direct appeal to the disciples to preserve their confidence in prayer, could the discourse come to its end. Only in such an appeal is its lesson driven thoroughly home. For the lesson is not that God will hear the cries of His people and grant them deliverance from their distresses; but that His people must needs always pray and not grow weary.

Whether God's people will in point of fact always pray and not faint is outside the scope of discussion. It would have been inconsequent to raise that question here. But the very purpose of the whole discussion is to incite to that confident trust in God which will lead to persistent prayer to Him for needed protection. And there could not easily be devised a way to give this incitement force and effectiveness, more pointed than our Lord's closing demand: 'God is ever ready to hear the cries of His people—What about your faith? Will it abide? When I come again, what shall I find?' We cannot infer, then, from our Lord's sharp question, as He turns suddenly upon His disciples and drives the lesson of His parable home, that faith will have perished—or almost perished—from the earth before He comes again. We can only infer that He would not have faith perish from the earth. It is therefore that by the great plea of the faithfulness of God, He urges His disciples to preserve it.

There are one or two points which seem to require brief notice in conclusion lest they should obtrude themselves as objections to the uneschatological interpretation of our paragraph.

It may be thought, for instance, that so strongly stressed a promise as we find here (vv. 7-8^a) of God's speedy intervention on behalf of His people in all the trials of life, would supersede the necessity of perseverance in prayer on their part, and so evacuate the parable of significance. We must bear in mind, however, that the promise is not made apart from, but in connexion with, perseverance in petition. It is those who cry unto Him day and night to whom the Lord promises that God will give them His speedy succour. The difficulty, moreover, if it be a difficulty, is inherent in the case and bears equally against any interpreta-

tion of our Lord's words. It might as easily be said that so strongly stressed a promise of the Lord's speedy coming to deliver His people would supersede the necessity of exhorting them to persevere in prayer for His coming. Whatever difficulty we find here rests really on our failure to estimate aright the inconstancy of our hearts: how quickly in the experience of trial we cease to trust God's promises and to seek to Him for our relief. The measure of our need of encouragement to perseverance is not the length of time through which we must endure, but the lassitude of our faith and our proneness to faint.

It may be felt again that the introduction of the coming of the Son of Man in v.^{8b} implies the dominating presence of that conception in the preceding context. That would be true, however, only if the Son of Man and His coming were introduced in v.^{8b} as a matter of course. So far is that from being the case that they are thrown forward in the sentence with great emphasis.¹ Their appearance is therefore notably abrupt, and by its suddenness it is advertised to us that something new is brought into view. A startling turn is given thus to the discussion with the effect of producing a revulsion of feeling and of calling the

¹ Plummer: 'Note the emphatic order, with δ $\nu\acute{\iota}\delta\varsigma$ τ . $\alpha\nu\theta\rho$, and $\epsilon\lambda\theta\omega\upsilon\tau$ being placed before the interrogative particle.' So also Meyer and Weiss.

disciples sharply back to a contemplation of their own part in the matter. 'Nevertheless, the Son of man when he comes—shall he'—I put it to you: shall He—'find faith on the earth?' This language admits indeed of no other explanation than that the coming of the Son of Man had not been in thought before and is introduced here unexpectedly and with tremendous effect.

Finally, it may be asked whether, on the uneschatological interpretation of this parable, it is not made a mere doublet of the Parable of the Importunate Friend (Lk 11⁵⁻⁸). We need not dwell on the depreciatory adverb; for the rest the lesson of the two parables is, on the view taken, no doubt the same. But surely it is not contrary to our Lord's manner to enforce the lessons He would convey by more than one similitude. We have a couple of instances of such doublets from Him in the narrow compass of Matthew's great chapter of Parables of the Kingdom—in the parables of the Mustard Seed and Leaven, and in those of the Hidden Treasure and Pearl of Price. Obviously our Lord was fertile in similitudes, and no doubt He varied them endlessly in His daily teaching. We can infer from such doublets only on the one hand that the topic of which they treat was one to which He repeatedly adverted, and on the other that in the mind of His reporter as well as of Himself it was a topic of importance.

Contributions and Comments.

Bearing the Cross.

BOTH Matthew and Mark omit to say definitely that Jesus had part in bearing the cross to the scene of the crucifixion. They both emphasize the fact that Simon was 'compelled' to bear it—'compelled,' no doubt, because he rebelled against so great an indignity. (One wonders if he ever realized the privilege of sharing indignity with Jesus!) St. John is more explicit. He says that Jesus went out 'bearing the cross for himself.' He, however, omits any reference to Simon's part. He writes as if he were an eye-witness. Yet had he seen his master bearing too heavy a burden, would he not render assistance? We know so little of the circumstances. Luke's narrative is fuller. It witnesses to the accuracy of the other three. He makes an addition we think. Of late we have been taught to regard Luke as the careful

and accurate historian. He writes: 'And laid on him (Simon) the cross to bear it "after" Jesus' (Lk 23²⁶). What does 'after' mean? Does $\delta\pi\sigma\theta\epsilon\nu$ mean 'after' in 'time' or in 'position'? Probably the latter. If we accept that rendering, then we regard Luke as telling us that 'Jesus went to Golgotha bearing the cross, but that on the way hither the burden was too heavy for him, and that the soldiers compelled Simon to get under the beam "behind" ($\delta\pi\sigma\theta\epsilon\nu$), and thus relieve Jesus of half the weight, but not replacing him altogether.' Thus both Jesus and Simon carried the cross at the same time. (Tradition pictures the cross of Jesus as being of more than the ordinary length, and consequently would be more than ordinarily heavy. Jesus retained His position under the beam $\pi\rho\acute{o}\sigma\theta\epsilon\nu$ (before), and Simon $\delta\pi\sigma\theta\epsilon\nu$ (behind) Jesus.

M. C. MACKENZIE.

Swatow, China.