

to say about love—the vision of the love of Christ on the cross in its effect upon us, making us repent of our sinfulness and bringing us into such a response of love that we say, ‘I will arise and go to my Father.’ It is all admirable; but it is not enough.

We may doubt if the vision of the love of any man, even the love of the man Christ Jesus, is enough to kindle the response of love in the heart of every other man. When Paul’s heart is kindled by it he sees something more in the cross of Christ than the love of one individual man for other men. He always sees what we might call a representativeness in the death of Christ. Thus he says, ‘The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died.’ That representativeness of the cross of Christ is impossible in any real sense upon Mr. RAVEN’S doctrine of His Divinity. For it implies a relationship to the universe of God which no mere man can sustain. That relationship belongs to the doctrine of Christ’s Divinity. Rejecting the Divinity, Mr. RAVEN has no place for it in the Atonement.

The universe is hung upon a law of righteous-

ness. All its motions are orderly. It reflects the orderly mind of God. When a man by his sinfulness breaks through that orderly movement it is not enough that he should be sorry for it. It is enough for him, but it is not enough for the universe. In the physical sphere, if a man by his carelessness smashes the tooth of a wheel, it is not enough that he should say he is sorry for it. The interruption to the even flow of the machinery must be removed. So is it in the moral sphere. Even more so, because the adjustments of the moral order are more delicate than those of the physical order. Our own conscience demands reparation as well as repentance. The conscience of the whole universe demands it. And since it is notorious that a man cannot make reparation for the evil he has done in the universe of God’s moral order, it falls upon Christ, who is the power of God and the wisdom of God, to make that reparation as an essential part of His Atonement.

Is this too difficult for the ordinary intelligence? We do not think so. We have never found it so. The ordinary intelligence is never really at rest in repentance for sin until it recognizes that Christ has made reparation for the wrong that sin has brought into the world.

The Psalter and the Present Distress.

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TO-DAY we are being swept along by forces which we can neither persuade nor control, and there are moods in which we almost permit ourselves to be convinced of what some one has rather cynically called the futility of all human discussion. Yet the man who has nothing to say to the sorrows and the horror, the tragedy and the welter, of the world to-day, has nothing to say at all: for what are they but the general sorrows and tragedies of men ‘writ large’? The mystery we face and the burden we carry to-day is, though doubtless on a stupendous scale, the mystery and the burden

which men have borne from the beginning. God is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; but so is man, so also is human life. We are not ‘the first that ever burst’ into this tempestuous sea. The men who wrote the Psalms and the men who all down the ages have sung them were tossed upon it too; and it is just here that the Psalter can render us its inestimable service. It was out of the depths of a sorrow as keen as ours that the Psalmists cried to God, and the deep of our experience answers to the deep of theirs. They knew what was in man, and that is why they

find us to-day. They knew the strangeness and the sorrow of life, but amidst it all they also knew God to be their Shelter and their Strength. Never have there been men who felt the pathos of life more keenly. It was to them a mystery, and they knew that by searching they could never fully find it out, but they sought, like the brave men they were, till sometimes their hearts grew bitter and throbbed with pain (Ps 72^{2, 3, 16, 21}). Their voice that 'sense of tears in mortal things' which is felt by all who look with fearless eyes at the pain and surprises of life. They exhaust the range of metaphor in trying to express their sense of its frailty. It is like the grass or the meadow-flower, like a passing shadow, like a dark night, like a breath that passes and never returns. And the enemies are there too. Throughout the whole length of the Psalter, and even in the briefest and the gentlest Psalms like the twenty-third, you can hear their stealthy tread and listen to their venomous words: and ever and anon there falls upon the ear the sob of a breaking heart that longs to fly away and be at rest and lodge in the wilderness, far from the stormy wind and tempest (55^{6f}).

In such a world, or at least with such a mood upon them, the Psalmists feel their homelessness: they are but pilgrims and strangers in the earth. They suffer and they toil, rising early and sitting down late to the evening meal and eating the bread of sorrows (127²). They have no hope or comfort but in God; but in Him they can rest like a weaned child on the bosom of his mother (131²). Small wonder that the words of men who looked into life with such stern sorrow in their eyes should have found all through the centuries an echo in the hearts of other men bowed by the weight of grief or persecution or war. In all times of distress, when men and nations were walking through the valley of the deep shadow, their words have been a comfort and an inspiration—to men like the Huguenots, the Covenanters, and many another in their grim battles for justice and for freedom. The well of the Psalter is very deep, and we, like these men, may draw from it. Indeed, it is not so much a well as a river, whose streams through many an age have made glad the city of God.

The world of the Psalmists was a world of conflict—of peril, darkness, and tragedy; but through their darkness flashed rays of the heavenly light, or we might more truly say that their dark-

ness was pierced by a mild yet steady light which not seldom shone so brightly as to chase it all away. For, as the darkness and the light are both alike to God, so the Psalmists, each in his own measure, tasted something of that divine superiority to the chances and changes of human fortune. 'My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed' (57⁷). They are not afraid though the mountains be torn up by the roots and flung into the sea. If only Almighty God is with them, how can flesh harm them (56⁴)? So with quiet hearts they lie down amid perils (4⁸) refreshed and sustained by the God who never slumbers nor sleeps (121⁴).

The despondency and sorrow which crush so many a heart to-day had already been felt and voiced by the singers of the olden time—by men who asked:

Is His love clean vanished for ever?
Is His faithfulness utterly gone?
Hath God forgotten to be gracious,
Or in anger shut up His compassion? (77^{8f}).¹

They have been voiced by men who say:

My spirit is faint within me,
My heart is bewildered within me.
I remember the days of old,
And brood over all Thou hast done (143^{4f}).

In our time, as in the days of the Psalmists, there are men who 'fret themselves because of evil-doers and of the men who bring wicked devices to pass.' There are hearts that do not know how to answer the challenge of the sceptic when he asks, 'Where is now thy God?' To-day, as of old, there are those who cry:

How long shall the wicked, O Lord,
How long shall the wicked exult,
With their blustering arrogant words,
Their braggart and wicked speech,
Crushing Thy people, O Lord,
And afflicting Thy heritage,
Murdering widows and sojourners,
Slaying the fatherless? (94⁸⁻⁶).

There are those whose faith has been staggered till

Their feet were almost gone,
Their steps had well-nigh slipped (73⁵),

and who have been driven to say for a season:

So I sought to understand it,
But a wearisome task it seemed (73¹⁶).

It is not only, however, that the larger features of those ancient songs are reproduced in the experi-

¹ The translations I have taken from my *Psalms in Modern Speech* (Jas. Clarke & Co.).

ence of to-day, but even many of the details, though one does not look for details in poetry like the Psalms. The lines which describe the cruel and resolute craft with which the enemies of Israel planned their wars might have been written to-day :

For see ! Thine enemies roar,
They that hate Thee lift up their head,
Laying crafty plans for Thy people
And plotting against Thy jewels.
'Come, let us blot them out as a nation,
That Israel's name be remembered no more' (83²⁻⁴).

And then comes the muster of nations from the various parts of that small world, which reminds us of the muster to-day from the ends of the earth :

For, conspiring with one accord,
They have made a league against Thee—
Tents of Edom and Ishmaelites,
Moab, and the Hagrites,
Gebal and Ammon and Amalek,
Philistia, with the people of Tyre (83⁵⁻⁷).

To-day too, and on a more terrific scale, we have seen

Kings of the earth conspiring
And rulers consulting together

to snap the bonds and fling away the cords that bind human society together (2^{2f}). To-day, as then, we have the policy of frightfulness. To-day, as then, we have baby-killers, and to-day, as then, there is the thirst for reprisals :

Happy be he who shall recompense thee
For all thou hast done unto us.
Happy be he who shall seize and dash
Thy children against the rocks (137^{8f}).

To-day, as then with Edom and Israel, two brother nations are fighting, nations whose languages are closely akin, and the one is saying of the capital city of the other :

Lay her bare, lay her bare,
Right down to her very foundation (137⁷).

To-day we know something of the terror that flieth by night—a terror all the more terrible that it is not the creation of nature, but the work of malignant genius. It is a time when

Nations roar and kingdoms totter,
He utters His voice, earth melteth away (46⁶).

Now, as then, we have the clashing of two cultures. The background of the later Psalms which we know as the Maccabean is the struggle of the Greek and the Hebrew, not very unlike the titanic struggle

which is being waged to-day. Then the representatives of the one culture were seeking to impose it by force upon the representatives of the other, and the champions of the spiritual order resisted the encroachment even unto blood. With the 'high praises of God in their mouth and a two-edged sword in their hand' (149⁶) they fought to the death, not to extend their culture over nations that resented it, but in defence of their own peculiar life. They did not fight for dominion, but for freedom to live their own life, to exercise their own religion, to preserve the type which had been handed down from the ancient days, and which had made them the distinctive people that they were.

Then, again, we are brought near to the experience of the Psalmists, not only by the circumstances of the days in which we live and the struggles which we face, but also by the temper—the fierce and vindictive temper—which is begotten of such struggles. Through many a Psalm breathes the wild and cruel spirit of war :

I chased the foe till I caught them,
And turned not till I made an end of them.
I smashed them—they could not rise—
They fell beneath my feet.
I beat them like dust of the market-place,
Stamped them like mud of the streets (18^{37f, 42}).

Some of the most brilliant Psalms are songs of praise for victory in war :

God arises, His enemies scatter ;
They that hate Him flee before Him.
As smoke before wind is driven,
As wax doth melt before fire,
So before God vanish the wicked (68^{1f}).

Again :

Everywhere heathen swarmed round me ;
In the name of the Lord I cut them down.
They swarmed, yea, swarmed around me ;
In the name of the Lord I cut them down.
They swarmed around me like bees,
They blazed like a fire of thorns ;
In the name of the Lord I cut them down (118¹⁰⁻¹²).

There are pictures not a few of the hideous havoc wrought by war, and it is no accident that these pictures are most detailed and vivid when the havoc was wrought upon the things and the places dear to the religious heart. For nothing so stirred the Jews to sorrowful indignation as the desecration of the holy and beautiful house in which they had worshipped the God of the fathers. They are grieved to the soul when the blood of the saints

was poured out like water, and the dead were left for the birds of the air and the beasts of the field to devour (79²); but they were grieved with a sorrow too deep for words, when the house of God was defaced or destroyed by the ravages of war: and, with the fate of Rheims and many another ancient and famous church before our eyes, we can enter into the sorrowful soul of the Psalmist who lamented:

Like lions Thine enemies roared through Thy house,
 Replacing our symbols by signs of their own,
 Hacking, like woodsmen that lift
 Axes on thickets of trees,
 Smashing with hatchets and hammers
 All of its carved work together.
 They have set Thy temple on fire,
 To the very ground they have outraged
 The place where dwelleth Thy name.
 They have said in their heart, 'Let us utterly smite them.'
 They have burned all the houses of God in the land
 (74⁴⁻⁶).

In the light of all this it is not so very difficult to understand the passion and the fury with which the outraged heart reacted upon these things. We used to shudder at the imprecatory Psalms, and let us hope we shudder still—for we have not so learned Christ; but we, who have seen in these latter days what antecedently we could never have believed of the horrors and the inhumanities of war, are able to understand those Psalms as they have seldom been understood since the flaming words leaped from torn and bleeding hearts. We could not take their dreadful prayers upon our lips: we could not ask God to feast our eyes upon our foes, or to grant that our feet might be washed in the blood of the wicked. But too well we understand to-day the mood from which such prayers can spring.

O Lord, Thou God of vengeance,
 Thou God of vengeance, shine forth.
 Lift Thee up, Thou Judge of the earth,
 And pay their deserts to the proud (94¹¹).

Perhaps nowhere does this passion of resentment blaze out more fiercely than in the eighty-third Psalm:

Deal Thou with them as with Sisera,
 And with Jabin at the torrent of Kishon,
 Who at Endor were destroyed,
 And became as dung for the ground.
 Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb,
 All their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna,
 Who have said, 'Let us take to ourselves
 The dwellings of God in possession.'

Whirl them, my God, like dust,
 Like stubble before the wind.
 As the fire that kindleth the forest,
 As flame that sets mountains ablaze,
 So with Thy tempest pursue them,
 And terrify them with Thy hurricane.
 Fill with dishonour their faces,
 That they seek Thy name, O Lord.
 Everlasting shame and confusion,
 Disgrace and destruction be theirs.
 Teach them that Thou alone
 Art most high over all the earth (vv. 9⁹⁻¹³).

These hymns of hate were sung by good men whose hearts were stung by grief and cruelty into bitter vindictiveness. They are not the expression of national spite, they are not a mere cry to the national God to avenge the people who worship Him; they are a cry to the God of all the earth to avenge the moral order of the world, which had been wronged by the cruelty and rapacity of those who are denounced. In essence they are nothing but the vehement expression of a belief in the moral order, and of the desire to see its consummation hastened upon the arena of history. The men whom the Psalmists hate and curse are not cursed as the enemies of Israel, but as the enemies of God and His law: they are those who would dash children against the rocks, the cruel and the proud, who know no pity and no reverence, but who defy God and trample upon the instincts of justice and of mercy which lie deep in the unsophisticated heart.

It ought not to be forgotten, however, that the imprecations of which we have been speaking are not always found upon the lips of those who have so cruelly suffered. From some of those who have suffered most no such word is heard at all. The writer of the forty-second and forty-third Psalms prays for deliverance from crafty and crooked foes. 'It pierces me to the heart,' he tells us,

To hear the enemy's taunts,
 As all the day long they say to me,
 'Where is thy God?' (42¹⁰).

But he calls down no fire from heaven upon the men who pressed him so hard. 'O soul of mine,' he simply says,

O soul of mine, why art thou downcast?
 And why art thou moaning within me?
 Hope thou in God:
 For yet shall I praise Him,
 My Saviour, my God (v. 11).

There is no suffering in the Psalter so keen as that revealed in the sorrowful words of the twenty-second Psalm—words which our Saviour made His own in the hour of His agony; and yet no imprecation rises to the lips of him who poured out his soul in that Psalm. We are reminded of the noble words of Job towards the end of the great speech in which he vindicates his character and which touches the highest point of Old Testament morality:

I never rejoiced at an enemy's fall,
Nor triumphed when any misfortune befel him:
I never have suffered my mouth to sin
By demanding his life in an imprecation (31^{29f.}).

But these lofty heights of self-control were scaled by few; and alike in their general circumstances and in their temper those distant days lie very close to the circumstances and the temper of to-day.

THE NOTE OF JOY.

Now before going on to point out some of the lessons which the Psalter is fitted to teach us to-day, it is worth our while, in the midst of all these grim realities, to remember how the Psalter

begins and ends. It begins and ends upon a note of joy. It begins, 'Happy is the man who goes on his way' with the law of God in his heart. The Psalter is full of sorrow and strife, of perplexity and problems, of sobs and sighs; yet here, at the very beginning, is the answer, in anticipation, to all those doubts and fears. The Psalm assures us that, even in such a world as this, there may be such a thing as a happy man. And again, through all the sorrows which crowd its pages, the note of joy rings out—so much so indeed that the Hebrew title for the Psalter is The Book of Praises—but from the one hundred and forty-fifth Psalm the chorus of praise grows louder and louder till, in the end, the whole universe is called upon to offer its multitudinous song of praise to Jehovah. It was the joyous recognition of the fact that, despite all seeming, the purpose of God goes marching on; that the world is in Hands as strong as they are kind; that the King of the ages, who could maintain His throne at the flood, could sit securely there for ever (29¹⁰). For His are the kingdom, the power, and the glory, world without end.

Literature.

TURKEY, GREECE, AND THE GREAT POWERS.

MR. G. F. ABBOTT is entitled to write about Turkey, for he is the author of *Turkey in Transition*, and he is also entitled to write about Greece, for he is the editor of *Greece in Evolution*. We cannot possibly give him the go-by and comfortably console ourselves with the indignant declaration that he knows nothing about it. But he has written a most disconcerting and even distressing book about Turkey and about Greece, and about the way in which we and our Allies have mismanaged both. Its title is *Turkey, Greece, and the Great Powers: A Study in Friendship and Hate* (Scott; 7s. 6d. net).

It is a story of clever management on the part of the Central Powers, and especially Germany, first of Turkey and then of Greece. It is a story of almost incredibly stupid mismanagement of these countries, first of one and then of the other, on the part of the Entente Powers. Britain is

most to blame, according to Mr. Abbott, for the mismanagement of Turkey; France is most to blame for the mismanagement of Greece.

As regards Turkey, the first blunder, and it was a serious one, was the appropriation of the two Turkish war vessels which were almost ready for delivery when war broke out. Germany met that blunder by the present of two still better vessels, and gave them the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*. We never recovered that first bad step. But it was not the only blunder committed by the one side or taken advantage of by the other. 'Indeed,' says Mr. Abbott, 'when we contemplate the evolution of the various belligerents' policy towards Turkey, as it has been set out in the foregoing pages, we cannot avoid sharing Sir Edward Grey's naïve wonder "that the inevitable catastrophe did not come sooner."'

The mistakes we have made with Greece are still more numerous and still more inexcusable. But their responsibility belongs to French diplomacy rather than to British. Mr. Abbott