

for possible illustrations of the Christ-Stone or Christ-Rock. It is therefore reasonable to affirm that it was from such a collection that Peter and Paul took their doctrine and the quotations in proof of it, and not that either of them was borrowing from the other.'

The existence of such a collection of extracts from the Old Testament helps us to understand certain mistaken references to the Prophets which are made in the New Testament, and which have caused much perplexity to its interpreters. 'For example, in the opening of the Gospel of Mark, where the mission of John the Baptist is described, we are told in the oldest copies that it is written *in Isaiah* that the Lord will send His messenger before His face, and that there is the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Strictly speaking, it is only the second of these quotations that belongs

to Isaiah, the first of them should have been referred to Malachi. Consequently, later transcribers have judiciously altered the words, "In Isaiah the prophet," to "In the prophets."

In Mt 27<sup>9</sup> the prediction about Judas and the thirty pieces of silver is referred to Jeremiah. It is really a composite quotation, made up out of Zechariah and Jeremiah, and it would have been better, if a single reference was made, to refer it to Zechariah. Dr. Rendel HARRIS believes that Matthew took the quotation out of his Book of Testimonies. Thus a mistake, which has caused much searching of heart and not a little dishonest exegesis, is accounted for. 'It is easy to see that such mistakes in reference were almost inevitable in the use of the primitive Bible text-book, especially if the authorities were marked in the margin instead of in the text.'

## The Christian Community.

BY THE REVEREND JOHN A. HUTTON, D.D., GLASGOW.

THERE is one thing about which the New Testament is decisive and incontrovertible—that Jesus founded a Church. And there is one thing to which the later books of the New Testament bear an equally decisive and incontrovertible testimony; it is that even by the time the canon was closed, there was, here in this world, an organic, self-reliant, sufficiently unanimous body which called itself the Church, which had the presumption, or, as we should say, which had the faith to believe that it held within itself the secret for the safeguarding and salvation of the human race.

Look at those two things in turn. There is one thing which so pervades the Gospels once one's eyes are open to look for traces of it,—it is the fact that Jesus took especial pains to gather round about Him a group of people. Accepting the narratives as they stand, and not trying to go beyond what is written, we cannot say on what principle our Lord selected those who formed the nucleus of the Church. Indeed, it would almost seem as though the selection had been made with the

very purpose of confuting any qualifying test which later on we might erect so that it might become a barrier to those who happened not to be able to answer that test.

You would not call them able men. You would not call them men of great insight; nor were they men of a natural steadfastness who could be trusted to stand fast in trying times. They were not all of one pattern. They were not men who showed any natural control of their own temperaments. They could be passionate upon occasion; they could be vain; they could be petty; they could be stupid. And yet, once more, the fact is that our Lord chose these men and on them He risked the future of His cause. He bore with their misunderstandings, with their unsteadiness. He did not dismiss them from His side even when, as He foresaw, they would leave Him at the last pinch. No; He seemed to be intent upon one thing only with regard to them, and that, as the narrative says, that they should be 'with him.' He never doubted that if they were

with Him during the length of time which God in His inscrutable counsel had appointed Him, thereafter though they might separate themselves from Him in an access of animal terror, the old days would gain upon them and they would come back to Him no longer dead, and would love Him for ever in God.

We turn to the other fact, which is the dominating fact of the later books of the New Testament: that even before the close of the canon, let us say, roughly speaking, about the year 100, there is already here in this world a Society, explain its origin and its intention as you will, which can use language and forecast a policy such as can only be justified by believing that that Society held itself to be founded and organized by God, and that it would survive the crises of history and the wear and tear of time.

There is a very precious counsel in Holy Scripture, that in times of misgiving it is wise to go back and consider the beginnings of things. I am thinking of the words, 'Let us hold fast the *beginning* of our confidence steadfast unto the end.' That counsel, I take it, is just this: in a time of misgiving, misgiving as to the future and prospect of any institution such as the Church, it is a reassuring thing to consider how the Church first came into being. For the reasons and causes which led a thing to come into being are the reasons and causes which shall sustain the thing in being. 'If there ever was one good man,' says Emerson, 'there will be another and there will be many.' If the Church arose, the Church will arise, and for the same reason.

I am never so depressed about the future of the Church as when I hear suggestions made for its greater future, suggestions which are not to be found in the New Testament. I see no future for the Church on any grounds other than the deepest grounds. It is only when I think of the Church as a tragic and human necessity, sustained by God for the relief and safeguarding of man's essential life, as a great gift to save us from the various despairs to which life in the long run reduces man,—it is only then that I have no fear.

There are three things that our Lord said about the Church; and when we read the later books of the New Testament we can see that the Church conceived itself as the trustee of Christ's very

commission. The three things you will find in three well-known sayings of Jesus in which, to take the Gospel narrative as it stands, He confided to His disciples what their function in this world should be. We can hardly imagine that the early disciples understood at the moment what the words of Jesus implied; for later we find them guilty of a deplorably low ambition. But in that very circumstance there is another illustration of the value of saying great things whether people understand them or not. Perhaps people understand more than they understand; and the fact is that those early disciples later on recalled those great things which when they first heard them went beyond them.

'Ye are the salt of the earth,' said Jesus. That is to say, 'Ye are that element in life without which this whole human business will rot and go to pieces.'

Second, 'Ye are the light of the world.' 'Ye are,' that is to say, 'that element, that core of pulsating reality which, if you will not of your own wretched timidities restrain it, will radiate and urge man so that he shall go on, living to the height of his powers, and shall blame himself for every failure.'

And again, Jesus said, 'Whatsoever ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' 'Ye are,' that is to say, 'that living body whose very function it is to form the moral taste of the world, to create and to sustain within man a supernatural conscience. What you condemn, God will condemn even in the view of outsiders; and what you permit, God will ratify.'

Now the only ground on which we could set aside sayings of this kind would be, were we in a position to say that this whole idea of the Church assumes a certain helplessness in human nature by itself, or a certain wrong-headedness or even viciousness. Quite so! That precisely is what the New Testament does assume. Ten years ago, in the height of our colossal pride and ignorance, a man in my place, I myself an example, might have held some genial theory of human nature—that man was naturally good, and that what he wanted was to be free from the restrictions of external authority. I do not suppose we have many defenders in these days of that modernism which seems in the lurid light of the last five years so antiquated and preposterous, that man is a

quiet creature, safe, amenable, docile. Surely, if the aspect of things during the last five years and at this moment means anything, it means that there is something in man wild and savage, until it is controlled or cast out. 'Is not man naturally good?' James Boswell—a Scotchman too—said to Samuel Johnson—an Englishman forsooth; to which Johnson replied, 'No, sir; no more than a wolf!'

*There is the paradox of Christianity, wolves that we are, 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called sons of God!'* And the whole Christian business is—ways and means.

Personally, I see no hope of a revival until men make these things quite plain to themselves. I have not much faith in a loyalty to the Church, to the whole conception of the Church, which rests on side issues. Nothing in the long run survives except what is necessary; and nothing is loved with a passion that confronts death quietly, except something which is felt to be necessary and essential.

I have been staying for the last few weeks in Benderloch, on the north side of Loch Etive. The rock formation of that countryside is for the most part conglomerate. Approaching the little village, the road twines round the foot of an immense rock, Dunvullanree, which stands sheer and precipitous, and under the shadow of it one walks. Standing there one can see how that great boulder was created. It is typical conglomerate. Gravel, small boulders, large boulders, all obviously at one time rounded and separate, are held together in an indissoluble mass, so that that beetling face has withstood unworn the onset of Atlantic gales for thousands upon thousands of years. What brought that mass of isolated things together, and what held them together? Well, I know little of geology or of the formation of rocks, but I know this much: that what must have brought these boulders together and made of them one solid mass, was the effect of two events. First, there was obviously some great heat, some great warmth that melted what could be melted, and the molten element gathered round them all so that for a time it was one fluid mass. Then suddenly a great sea fell cold and hard upon that molten mass and congealed it into one compact thing; and there it stands.

The Church of Christ was formed and stands by the operation of two great movements; and the Church of Christ will continue to stand, and those who belong to her will be radiant in their confidence face to face with an ambiguous and disheartening world just so long as they perceive that the Church rests upon the same two movements, two movements which form the warp and the woof of the web of life. The Church was brought together and stands together by the force, first, of a great love, and, second, of a great terror. The warm love to Christ for what He was, for what we think we see in Him, that on the one hand; and, on the other hand, the terror of deep darkness, the awful sense of what a thing life is if Christ be not for us men the final truth.

It seems to me, looking back across history, and attending to the movements of my own spirit, in which, after all, history repeats itself—repeats in tiny wavelets in my own spirit what in large billows of the sea it manifests on the wide scale of history,—it seems to me that the whole art of life, the whole art of living believably and joyfully, the whole art of recovering our confidence in the Church of Christ in this world, is the knowing where to put the accent between these two great movements. Not, indeed, that we can separate them for even a moment in our thought. And yet, there are times when one rather than the other is the thing we ought to emphasize. There are times when it encourages us and gives us a perfect confidence in the future to make clear to ourselves our reasons for gratitude to Christ, for what He is, and for what we find in Him. For what a place of love, of kindness, of tenderness, the Church of Christ with all her shortcomings is! Where else in this hard world are the poignant sorrows of the human heart honoured with such reverence and understanding, or credited with such significance, or comforted with such an interpretation! But there are other times when it helps us to appreciate all that with a sudden transport—as, for example, when we invite ourselves to reflect for a moment on what a ghastly and forlorn thing this life of ours would be, on what a ghastly and forlorn thing this life of ours indeed is, were the Church and all that it stands for conceivably eliminated or withdrawn.

We mortals cross this ocean of a world  
Each in the average cabin of a life.

It is a fine thing far out at sea to sit together with some kindred spirits in some sheltered place, the lights on, the windows sealed, the doors fast closed, with all the illusions of perfect security. But it is not a bad thing for the human spirit, because it cleanses our souls of all the cloud of custom and insensitiveness; it is not a bad thing, I say, to leave that well-lit place of seeming

security, and to go out on the deck alone, and to look over the side of our ship rushing through the dark waters.

Perhaps we are on the edge of a kind of shudder at things, which will only quiet itself again in the heart of the Christian community, on the breast of our Risen Lord. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

## Literature.

### A NEW COMMENTARY.

THE publication of a complete scholarly commentary on the Bible in a single volume is an event of the first importance. Its conception and its production are due to Professor A. S. Peake, though he has been assisted in editing the New Testament part by Principal A. J. Grieve. The title chosen for the binding is 'Peake's Commentary on the Bible,' but the title-page is *A Commentary on the Bible*, edited by Arthur S. Peake, M.A., D.D., Rylands Professor of Biblical Exegesis in the University of Manchester; Professor in Hartley College, Manchester; sometime Fellow of Merton College, Oxford: with the assistance for the New Testament of A. J. Grieve, M.A., D.D., Principal of the Congregational Hall, Edinburgh (T. C. & E. C. Jack; ros. 6d. net).

The first step in such an undertaking is to recognize the need for it. Now the need for a new commentary is always present. For to every generation the Bible has to be interpreted anew. There it is with its eternal appeal: its appeal has to be made effective by the commentator at every step in the march of time. In our day interpretation is the most urgent of all our mental necessities. A new commentary every ten years is the ideal. A new commentary now is indispensable.

The next step is to work out such a scheme as shall meet the need. Professor Peake, realizing that there was something both in the word and phrase commentary and in the paragraph commentary (usually called 'exposition') determined to combine the benefits of both. The text of the Bible is treated in paragraphs or passages; each passage has its meaning interpreted as a whole: and then within the paragraph the words and

phrases are explained separately. The editor further resolved to furnish introductions to all the great divisions of the Bible—the Pentateuch, the Historical Books, the Wisdom Literature, and the rest—and to all the great aspects of the Bible as a whole—its Meaning, its Literature, its Land, its Canon and Text, and so forth.

The third step was to find the authors. And in this also the editor was highly successful. But it is just as important to find the right author for the right article or book as to find a good author. To offer an Old Testament scholar a New Testament topic in these days of specialization would have been as fatal as foolish. Professor Canney is no authority on the Fourth Gospel, nor would Dr. A. E. Brooke have been at home in Amos. There are no doubt men who have been driven to the study of the whole Bible indiscriminately, and a few of them have mastered every part of it well enough to be able to write unexceptionable articles or expositions; but they stand between us and that final authority on whom we rely. Dr. James Moffatt was the man for the Development of the New Testament Literature; Dr. William T. Davison for Hebrew Wisdom.

Finally, everything had to be laid hold of by the editor—proportion, fulness, accuracy, printing, publication. And it is all accomplished in such a way that the ideal of a Commentary has been probably as nearly reached in our day as at any time in the history of the Bible.

### SOPHIA MATILDA PALMER.

Mr. Murray has published a Memoir of *Sophia Matilda Palmer, Comtesse de Franqueville, 1852-*