

master of the geography of Palestine, or at least as nearly master of it as any man can now make himself. He has superseded all the books in existence on the physical side of his subject; and even on the historical side he has at least eliminated some hoary misinterpretations.

Mr. A. C. Benson has written a book on Ruskin. He calls it *Ruskin: A Study in Personality* (Smith, Elder, & Co.; 7s. 6d. net). He has never written a better book. It consists of seven lectures on the life and work of Ruskin, delivered in the Hall of Magdalene College, Cambridge, in the Michaelmas term of 1910. Now, whatever else lectures may be when published, they are at least easy to follow. Not a sentence here has to be read twice. And then there is the personal charm. The egotism is everywhere, but it is never egotism. Besides, this is a serious effort to 'explain' Ruskin. Mr. Benson is an admirer, both of the man and of his work, a whole-hearted unabashed admirer; with a head, however, as well as a heart, and therefore capable of presenting a living picture.

Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co. have also published a cheap edition of Mr. Benson's most popular book, *From a College Window* (3s. 6d. net). It is the fourth edition and the seventeenth impression.

In spite of all that has been said by Ramsay and others in our day, there is still great darkness round the Epistles to the Seven Churches. The first thing to do is to explain the language. The Rev. T. Herbert Bindley, D.D., some time Prin-

cipal of Codrington College, Barbados, has begun there. Paragraph by paragraph is taken, then phrase by phrase; and when we have read his book to the end, we know all that modern scholarship can tell us about the language and its allusions. There is also something in the book to show the use of the Epistles for edifying. The title is *The Messages to the Seven Churches* (S.P.C.K.; 1s. 6d.).

Mr. Elliot Stock has reissued at a cheap price two good volumes of sermon literature by the Rev. Joseph Miller, B.D.—*Essentials of the Christian Religion*, and *Fundamentals of Unity* (each 3s. net).

There is much discussion at present of fundamental things. For everything has been denied, including the possibility of denying anything, and now we are going to begin again. This has happened with the Gospels as with other things. First the miracles were denied, then the existence of Christ, and as it does not seem worth while denying the existence of those who denied the existence of Christ, we are ready there also to begin again. The Rev. David Starr Jordan, President of Stanford University, has fallen in with the fashion and has written a book on *The Stability of Truth* (Williams & Norgate; 3s. 6d. net). It is a discussion of reality as related to thought and action. There are things to think, says President Jordan, and there are things to do. And when that is acknowledged, one stage of the new difficult process of affirmation will be accomplished.

## The Eschatology of the Parables.

BY THE REV. R. M. LITHGOW, LISBON.

THERE is in the parabolic teachings of Christ a large element of eschatology, of suggestion if not of absolute information in regard to the ultimate things as far as man's present outlook goes. These last things in themselves are such as man with his finite faculties can only conceive of in parabolic fashion. For here, as in metaphysics, thinking can only be carried on in a terminology the basis of which is the phenomenal and concrete. There is

a tendency in some quarters to circumscribe that infinite future which forms the horizon of the gospel revelation and of faith's utmost gaze, but we see no gain in seeking to bound with the name æonial what is practically man's eternal outlook. For man there is clearly an impassable barrier, beyond which he cannot follow the course even of imperishable things. And up to that point not a few of our Lord's parables carry us.

This they naturally do, because dealing with the permanent elements of man's being, and having as their scope the full range of his spiritual development. These parables are permeated with the atmosphere of the infinite, and their simple language palpitates with the thrill of the omniscience concealed behind their veil. They indicate the potential infinitudes of man, and no less the determinations of the deity. They awe us with their remorseless distinctions. They affect us to tears with their tender presentation of the heavenly grace. They encourage within us the most aspiring hopes, and again dismay us as they set forth the responsibilities of the divine sonship and service.

Their eschatology has its general and particular aspects. Thus all evil ends as regards its active manifestations, and possible effect on the course of what is good. While, too, the outcome of evil condemns and kills its own cause, the rewards of well-doing are such as help forward the interests of God's kingdom. But each form of evil has its own appropriate consequence, and every sort of divine service its suitable acknowledgment. Righteousness and a hearty acceptance of grace are seen at once to be natural and reasonable, while any refusal of these good gifts of God can only be portrayed as irrational and outrageous.

That synthetic view of the parabolic teaching, which our study of the parables has revealed, gives us distinct help in our appreciation of this eschatology, enabling us, as it does, to set its several elements in their proper light. We are by its aid put in the position to judge how the denouement of the individual story affects this parabolic history as a whole. A review of the parables in regard to their several results should fit us the better to focus their full disclosures on the subject of man's spiritual career, and bring to a juster conclusion our examination of the parabolic record of the Synoptic Gospels.

It is no mere world-end with which our present study deals, but rather the working out and essential issues of moral principles and eternally operative laws. For the realm of this parabolic doctrine reaches beyond space and time. It is that of God's kingdom, the life of which is righteousness, and the atmosphere and light of which are the holy love and the gladdening approval of man's Heavenly Father. If, as at times here represented in its conflict with the kingdom of darkness, and in travail towards fruition, the

thing that ought to be is not always that which obtains, still it ever figures as that which yet must be. For the good in these parables is ever the living and the lasting, while the evil is the evanescent thing that withereth away.

The parables which deal with man's natural condition represent this under the categories of use and possession. Man belongs of right to his Maker, whose beneficent purposes he has been formed to serve. But the Lucan parables reveal man as lost to God, while Matthew's opening ones represent him as largely lost to his destined use. The Sower's advent, which ought to make the wilderness rejoice and blossom, finds it turned from any fitness to receive a blessing, through the seed which he scatters upon it, into baser uses, and a premature and unpromising luxuriance. There is a general perversion here of the purpose for which good soil exists. And this perversion proves a bar to the fertility which as a tilled field it might have had. The good prepared ground receives the seed and enriches its owner with a plenteous harvest. But the trodden land remains a road, its thinness of soil keeps the rocky part unproductive, and that weedy corner has, with its showy, useless crop, precluded itself from sharing in the fruitfulness of the field it borders. That which might have been 'finely touched unto fine issues' has, through failure to realize its grand possibilities, become 'a common stone for better souls to break their hearts upon.' This is the sad end of the matter here, that man's failure to take advantage of God's fortune for him at the flood, 'binds the whole voyage of his life in shallows.' The parable is not without its suggestiveness as to the meaner uses to which the human soil when lost to its divine purpose may be turned. Roads have their use for this world's traffic: it is the rocks which, as its ribs, hold the material world together; and there are animals which live on weeds.

But when from the inanimate we turn to the organic and living pictures of man in these parables, we find that the issues are widened. The Wheat and Tares represent souls of not only contrasted but opposing character and influence. With these as a ripened crop, as also with the harvest of the sea when brought to valuation, what different fates await the good and bad. The pictures are drawn in terms of their several emblems and cannot be taken literally, but the striking contrast between

the ends here portrayed by Christ cannot be divested of its divine authority. The grace shown for the sake of the wheat, towards the tares, until the harvest, is a note which seems to confer animation upon both alike, and makes us read the farmer's decision about them with other feelings than we bear to grain. And what greater contrast could words in this connexion present than 'the wheat into my barn, and the tares bind in bundles to be burnt.'

It is, however, in the Parable of the Net, or good and bad Fish, that the eschatological element here comes most distinctively and appropriately before us. If the Soils have pictured a man's various possibilities, and the Wheat and Tares their diverging lines of development, it is this picture of the marketable and unmarketable Fish, which calls our attention to the serious issues of the great moral distinction, which these emblems represent. And so it is here in regard to this point alone that Christ adds His exposition. This is made fuller by noting with it His similar reference to this aspect of His Parable of the Tares. Putting both together, we are taught that at the end of things as we know them, the Son of Man shall send forth His angels, who shall separate the wicked from among the righteous, and gather out of His kingdom all that offend His people and violate His laws. Christ here pictures a triumphant but most solemn consummation for the cause of righteousness, when the wicked being cast out into their own place, the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

While the Matthean parables make no sign of seeking to bridge the awful gulf their opening teachings disclose, Luke's parallel set offers the relief of emphasizing man's primal connexion, while at the same time offering the further solace of revealing God's solicitude to regain the lost. Herein, too, the subject of Satan, the servant of Mammon, the son of Belial, is portrayed as one who is by right the son, the servant, and the subject of a Heavenly Father, whose divine wisdom and infinite love are taxed to the uttermost to compass the recall from the far country of sin, of the loved and lost child. These simple stories of the three-one parable disclose a tragedy compared with which the lurid shadows of the Matthean chasm are tame. For the very lightnings of the divine justice pale before the marvellously exposed agonies of the divine love.

But it is this surprising disclosure which more than anything adds to the solemnity of man's lost state. The moral law is to God for man but as His coat of mail, which manifests his Maker's sublime majesty and may compel submission. Even the loyal finger touching that ironclad hand feels cold. But in God's revealed love we see the deity unclothed, and in His grace to sinners, man may know the electrifying grasp of his Father's tender hand. To turn away from and do despite to that, constitutes the very depth and despair of man's depravity. What, we may well think, can be man's loss to God, compared with the forfeiture by man of the divine favour and affection.

Just as we found the thought of possession to have its place in Matthew's first parabolic triad, so conversely do we find that of use to be present here. The sad implications of man's loss to the Heavenly Father are darkened by that of the further loss he incurs for himself and others. The coin has lost its currency, the sheep its market value and possibilities of human service, the son his native worth and every source of self-respect and social esteem. Even the material substance that enables him to prosecute the course of wild living he has chosen, in preference to the amenities of his father's house, is wasted and exhausted thereby. Loss in every direction and respect is the true description of his fate who strays and stays away from God.

But it is the recovery of the coin, the reclaiming of the sheep, and the return of the prodigal that are the predominant notes to which these Lucan parables of the lost and found lead up. With a partiality to grace, which one misses in the more judicially minded Matthew, Luke's chosen eschatology here is an evangelic one. Over against that dreadful picture of the consuming furnace with the weeping and gnashing of teeth, we have the rejoicing together of those who have been active or are interested in the recovery or return of the lost. And in order that our thoughts about this happy scene may take a right direction, we have it interpreted for us as representative of the joy among the angels in heaven over sinners returning to God.

The parables of growth and prayer reveal to us the progress in the individual and in the world of the kingdom of heaven, and the success of the supplicants addressing their petitions to Him who inhabiteth its praises. This whole group of

parables presents but one figure set in contrast with those whose prayers are answered. This is the self-righteous Pharisee, whose congratulatory utterances do not reach past himself. While to the cries of recognized need and contrite penitence, the satisfaction of these wants is granted, this man of professed godliness and public devotion leaves the temple unjustified, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel.

It is a heavenward moving company who are represented in the finding or grace group of parables, by the Treasure Finder, the Pearl Merchant, and the Good Samaritan. These severally gain a rich prize, secure a precious jewel, and win eternal life. The Two Debtors also, although in varied measure, know the joy of, and manifest some gratitude for, sin forgiven. It is in the parables of the Unforgiving Debtor, and of Dives and Lazarus, that the eschatological aspect of matters is brought before us here. It is failure to show grace, which is the common offence of the great Debtor, and of the wealthy Dives. And in both cases it is to fellow-men of meaner station that this lack of grace is shown. It is indeed only in this direction that grace can be manifested, and thus there is good logic, as well as strict justice, in mankind being judged on this score, in respect of their conduct towards the poor. And, indeed, just as the millionaire finds his richest source of gain in the labour market, so should the heavenly capitalist recognize in the poor and the afflicted, the most profitable sphere for the employment and investment of his spiritual wealth. Here it is that grace can best be exercised, and in this quarter alone can man find a bank with divine security.

The Parable of Dives and Lazarus is, in view of these considerations, admirably suited to enforce its lesson on the value of graciousness, and the active exercise of grace. This, however, has not been always seen, and hence we find the late Dr. Service confessing to a difficulty in discovering any other purpose in this parable, than that of awakening serious thought, 'by a lightning flash in which reality bursts through appearance with the crash of doom.' But while we have here that awful lightning which 'life struck sharp on death makes,' we have bliss and woe set before us, as the wide apart portions of those whose earthly circumstances bred a selfish worldliness, or led to dependence on God. And the fact

that the beggar lay at the rich man's door without attracting any helpful attention, is for Dives the damning element in his case, and for all expositors that which sheds most light on the teaching of this parable. It is in strict keeping with this, too, that the Unforgiving Debtor of Matthew's parallel parable is kept in gaol till he pays all he owes, judgment in these parables being clearly directed against man's failure to manifest towards others the grace which, alike in temporal and spiritual blessings, he receives from God.

In the group of parables dealing with the divine claims, those of the Labourers, Two Sons, and Farm Servant present no eschatological aspect. The threatened cutting down, too, of the Barren Fig-tree, remains but a menacing threat in this parable, and even the unprofitable pedlar with his unused Pound but forfeits this as the penalty of his indolence. It is only in Luke's, as one of three reports given us of the parable of the Husbandmen, that the judgment on these rebellious tenants is expressed by Christ, Mark and Matthew both recording this as an answer given by His hearers to a question of our Lord's. In this case, too, the parable has, in the circumstances of its utterance, a distinct reference to the Jewish nation. We are thus confronted with the suggestive fact, that in connexion with the matter of man's godward duties, alike as regards service, loyalty, and occupancy of the divine belongings, there are no such penalties brought before us in the parabolic doctrine, as are associated with man's neglect of the divine word, and indifference to the divine grace and its demands. It is not so much man's failures in the sphere of moral duty, as his rejection of and sins against the constraints of the divine love, which incur the direst consequences, and this with reason, as a resistance of the divinest power the deity can exert.

The Sagacious Steward, and Rich Fool, of Luke's parabolic record, present us with a contrasted pair of pictures in regard to the final gain or loss which may prove the outcome of a human life. The one tells of a wise prescience, prompting to such charity as secures for its exerciser an entrance to the eternal habitations, while the other depicts the folly of that short-sighted selfishness which renders possible for the soul a total bankruptcy of life. Sagacity and folly are here respectively seen at their highest and lowest

reaches. Luke's Parable of the Great Supper, or Recusant and Ready Guests, and Matthew's Parable of the Bridesmaids, resemble each other, in representing the penalty, incurred by the ungracious and foolish characters here brought before us, as that of exclusion from a festive gathering. In both cases, however, that eternal bliss which these feasts symbolize, and the words uttered by the lord of the several banquets, give this penalty an importance and solemnity which in themselves the parabolic circumstances may seem to lack.

It is, however, Matthew's parables of the Wedding Feast and Robe, and of the Talents, which, in his last group, most distinctly relate to the realm of eschatology, although its position between the two doubtless causes this solemn shadow to fall over the Parable of the Ten Virgins also. The fate of the disloyal rebels in the first of these parables, although severe as could be, seems so just and indeed natural, that it affects us less than that of the guest without the wedding robe. Their case seems to answer to that of the wicked of the opening parables, whose attitude to God is that of disaffected and antagonistic parties all along, while it is the guest's acquaintance with and despite done to the heavenly grace which constitute the tragedy of his doom. And it is noteworthy that, wherever this is set forth, it is not necessary that the judgment, in order to impress us, should be depicted in severe or afflictive terms. It is the symbolized exclusion, from the divine grace and service, which gives all its terror to the outer darkness, and renders so inexpressibly fateful the taking of his disused talent from its faithless and slothful possessor.

While, indeed, it is obvious that the parabolic symbolism must not be made too much of, nor the parabolic language translated in any too literal fashion, it is no less apparent that it is not in their figures, as these set forth penalty, that we find in Christ's parables the severe and alarming aspect of their eschatology. This lies mainly in the more general and notable features, of that absolute distinction which they everywhere maintain between the good and evil, as also on the emphasis they put upon man's attitude to and responsibilities in connexion with the divine grace.

The specially eschatological aspect of their doctrine is that which sets forth the permanence and finality of the issues to which man's

two possible courses tend. This is the whole sting and terror of the final things, as depicted in these parables, and elsewhere in Christ's teachings, that they are set forth as final and irreversible, and it is man's confirmatory experience of the tendency to permanence of moral good or evil, which gives the deepest echo of his mind and conscience to their teachings. Nowhere in all Holy Writ is more importance placed upon the moral and spiritual features of the human race, and it is the pervading sense of this which gives to punishments, that in themselves are far from terrible, all the solemnity of some appalling doom. Isaac Taylor has finely said, 'What are the crash of worlds, or the universal blaze, or even the appalling apparatus of punishment, to the spirit that has become alive to the consciousness of its own moral condition, in the manifested presence of the High and Holy One. There is no extravagance in the supposition, that in the great day of inquiry and award, the moral shall so overwhelm the physical, that it will be sin, and not a flaming world, that shall appal the soul.'

We note, as the result of our survey of the eschatological element in these synoptical parables, that judgment appears in them under three categories. There is in the opening group in Matthew, as the climax to which these early parables lead up, a separation of the righteous and the wicked, the testing matter here being represented as worth or worthlessness. As the Gospel here but figures at most in the Sower and his Seed, we may regard the judgment here as in respect of Our Lord's prophetic office, or more widely, as for sin against that Light, which lighteth every man made in his Maker's image. In the parables of Dives and Lazarus, and of the Unforgiving Debtor, we have judgment executed on those who have done despite to grace and mercy. The position of the Matthean parable makes it contemporaneous with the first references of Christ to His own saving work. We may then regard the judgment here as in respect to our Lord's priestly office, and man's offered redemption through the Lamb of God. In the concluding parables of Matthew's Gospel we have a series in which judgment is pronounced in connexion with the discharge of distinctly Christian duties, those of heartiness towards grace, and of vigilance and diligence in the Master's service. The offences charged here are against Christ's kingly



office, and that loyal service and loving disposition which all His subjects owe to Him.

But these categories of judgment are no less capable of being severally related to the Three Persons of the Godhead. Thus regarded, we see the doom decreed on sin against the Father of spirits, in those judgments dealing with man's indifference to that moral nature, which, with its instinctive sense of right and wrong, he possesses as the favoured and honoured creature of God. Man's attention to this has at all times gained for him a deepening knowledge of the divine mind and will, while his neglect of it as here revealed has ever proved his deadliest snare. We see, too, no less clearly in the second category of these parabolic judgments, the sinful folly and disaster of man's rejection, of the grace that came by Jesus Christ, and the great salvation purchased by Him for all who by faith will receive it. And we also see in that third category, dealing with sins against

light and love, with despite and dearth of grace, and neglect of duty, on the part of those who have seen and tested that the Lord is gracious, the just but awful judgment of God upon those who have sinned against His convincing, quickening, reviving, sustaining, restraining, comforting, tender, and long-suffering, but jealous, and inexorably Holy Spirit.

But are not practically the Messianic offices, and the triune presentations of the deity, but graciously helpful steps and stages, in the devout worshipper's acquaintance, alliance, and communion with the infinite fulness of God? And are not an ever-deepening responsibility, and consequent heinousness of possible guilt, inseparably bound up with the soul's spiritual development? Are not indeed God's ever-enduring mercy, and that growth in grace which increasing intimacy with Him confers, the essential bases of man's hope of his abidance in any heaven of endless bliss?

## Recent Foreign Theology.

### The Languages of the Bible.

It is not often that we meet with Jerusalem on the title-page as the place where a book is published, although it was an inhabitant of Jerusalem, was it not, who said that of making many books there is no end. Jerusalem is the place of publication of a *Manual of Palestine Arabic* for self-instruction, prepared by Dr. H. H. Spoer and Mr. E. Nasrallah Haddad (Luzac; 6s. 6d.).

Professor Strack's *Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen* has reached a fifth edition, and has been partly rewritten. It is one of the best, as well as best-known, volumes of the 'Clavis Linguarum Semiticarum' (Munich: Beck; London: D. Nutt).

Professor A. T. Robertson's *Grammar of New Testament Greek* has been translated into German by Hermann Stocks, under the title of *Kurzgefasste Grammatik des Neutestamentlichen Griechisch* (Leipzig: Hinrichs. M. 5).

### Old Testament.

A NEW edition has been issued of the *Handbuch zur Biblischen Geschichte* of Dr. J. Schuster and

Dr. J. B. Holzammer. It is the seventh edition and it has been completely revised and much enlarged, the Editor of the Old Testament volume being Dr. Joseph Selbst, Professor of Theology in Mainz, and the Editor of the New Testament volume Dr. Jakob Schäfer, also a Professor of Theology in Mainz. Each volume contains over a hundred woodcuts and two or three maps. It need not be said that the interpretation of the Old Testament is on conservative lines, for nothing else will do in the Roman Catholic Church at the present time. Still, the Editors are scholars, well acquainted with their subject itself and its literature. And there is no evidence that the necessity of being conservative has seriously interfered with the independence of their judgment. The book is published by Messrs. Herder at Freiburg (2 vols., M. 12.50 and 10.50).

The third edition of Gunkel's *Genesis* has undergone careful revision, a revision which does not seem to have touched its principal positions, however singular they may be, but has introduced a good many alterations in small matters. One welcome feature is new. There is a series of excellent indexes, which have been prepared by Dr. Paul Schorlemmer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; Glasgow: Bauermeister. M. 11).