

consulting previous editions and collecting available manuscripts. He gives a list of the manuscripts collated. He says: 'The present is the first edition of the Hebrew Psalter to the text of which the evidence of any of the British manuscripts has contributed. Doubtless in it there will be found mistakes, due not only to errors of judgment, but also to those inaccuracies which seem almost inevitable when so many variants have to be dealt with and chronicled. The evidence, however, on which the text is based is before the reader in the notes. This at least will, it is hoped, be some contribution to the study of the *Psalterium iuxta Hebraeos Hieronymi*.'

Mr. Philip Whitwell Wilson has been in the United States of America studying the working of the laws against alcohol. Now 'P. W. W.' is the incarnation of honesty. What he sees he says he sees: what he says may be safely said after him. He has gathered the results of his observations into a book, which may be accepted as entirely reliable. Its title is *After Two Years* (United Kingdom Alliance; 6d.).

In New York he witnessed a 'wet' parade day. The parade 'was attended by about 15,000 persons in a city of six millions, which includes one-third Jews, an immense Irish, German, and Italian population, and, of course, Tammany Hall. The banners were stirring:

"Use a little wine for thy stomach's sake."

"God turned water into wine at Cana. The hypocrites turned wine into water in Congress. Where do we get off?"

"How does it feel to be a criminal? Ask Dad—he knows."

'The Italians carried a picture of the Last Supper by Leonarda da Vinci, and Cromwell as a brewer was invoked. But the occasion was a funeral. It meant that "John Barleycorn," as they call him, was dead.'

He was much struck with the complete absence of drink on the railways. 'It is really no use for bishops, deans, and vicars of the Episcopal Church in England to talk about liquor as if it were a virtue. In all my travel I have never seen a woman insulted and never seen a man the worse for drink.'

A Communion Meditation.

BY THE REVEREND ARTHUR J. GOSSIP, M.A., ABERDEEN.

'This is the day of the Lord's own contriving. Let us be glad and rejoice in it. O Lord, save us, we pray. O Lord, prosper us, we pray.'—Ps 118^{24, 25}.

THIS is a day of the Lord's own contriving, which an infinitude of Divine love and thoughtfulness and grace has alone made possible. And therefore, in the first place, now that this bend in the road has brought us within sight of Calvary, let us stand still awhile and look, until we grasp and feel again the wonder and amazement of the facts that meet us here.

Mrs. Meynell has a little poem, which Ruskin, in a reckless burst of too exuberant enthusiasm, once termed the finest thing in modern poetry, in which she stands and, dallying with an ordinary daisy in her hand, peers, as through a window, far out into mysteries inscrutable to us; muses and dreams of all that lies behind that common weed, all that went to the making of it, all that had to be

in order that it might exist—stands, all at once dwarfed, abashed, humbled, in a world suddenly grown awesome.

O daisy mine, what will it be to look
From God's side even of such a simple thing!

Was that the mood of this old singer of the long ago? Perhaps he had come up to the Temple as so often before, by the well-known road that he had traversed scores of times, nodding to the usual faces on the way; and, standing in the accustomed place, had seen and heard the daily service move on through its customary stately ritual, perhaps dully enough, with a mind atrophied by long familiarity; perhaps really accepting the gifts offered—God's strange affection for us, God's eager forgiveness, God's stubborn faith in those who have failed Him so often and so signally, God's queer belief that even yet things can be

righted and the twisted life made straight—accepting, but with little wonderment.

It was all so usual; it had all so often been experienced before, was taken as a thing of course. And suddenly the clouds were blown aside; and, with a heart stilled and awed and almost frightened, he saw things somewhat from God's side of them, all that had gone to the making of these gifts which he had been accepting so unthinkingly, stood there holding them in his hand, dazed and confused, thinking them out. This is a day which God alone could have contrived; and only Divine grace and loving-kindness, and self-sacrifice have made it possible for me.

And is not that the mood that befits us here? At Christ's Table we do feel it somewhat, do we not?—do have a hushed sense that we are face to face with the Central things; our spirits steal on tiptoe; our noisy natures sink their loud rude voices, because God is quite close.

Yet, even here, it is so easy to turn in without much emotion or surprise; to accept even Jesus Christ as only what is due to us; to thrust out a careless hand and take God's best without excitement as no very great affair. 'Of course,' said Heine, 'God will forgive me; that's what He is for.' And yet think it out, see it from God's side, and how staggering it is! Think out anything, indeed, and long before we reach an end our minds sink tired and fluttering helpless pinions into huge yawning depths and chasms past our fathoming. Almost the one authentic poet of our day stands looking at a common dog rose coming into bloom, and sees with amazement that the roots of that ordinary wayside bush run back almost to the beginnings of dim Time.

Very old are the woods;
 And the buds that break
 Out of the briar's boughs,
 When March winds wake,
 So old with their beauty are—
 Oh, no man knows
 Through what wild centuries
 Roves back the rose.

All that had to be before that innocent blossom, plucked by some child, who quickly tired of it and threw it away with a careless hand, could lie there withering in the hot dust.

Or we are whirled through the country, watch the smoke wreaths curling up lazily from sleepy homesteads in the sheltered hollows. And there

are bairns upon their way to school, and women flitting to and fro about the doors, and men at work among the fields; and it is all so peaceful, so idyllic, drowsing there in the hot sun. And yet to make that cosy nook what unthinkable cataclysms and upheavals had to be; when the sea broke in, overwhelming all things, and for long æons rolled and tossed and surged above them here; when the mountains were heaved up with confusion and tumult, when the gliding glaciers slowly, age after age, ground down the ragged peaks to this soft billowy upland, when the kindly soil was fashioned by wild hurricane and bitter frost and howling tempest out of the hard rocks—all that was necessary that these quiet fields might lie so soft and green and golden in the low morning sunlight.

And here are we, a company of needy folk gathering in hopefully about Christ's Table, sure that we shall be uplifted, granted every grace and power we can require. And yet, could we take these simple symbols into our hands, and realize all that went to the making of them; could we see from God's side of them, how staggering, how stupendous it would be.

The whole New Testament is just an effort to do that—to show us these things from God's side. They know that they are failing; they are conscious that it breaks through language, won't describe, eludes them, that, as Luther says, they are using half words and quarter words like a baby; they stammer, they stutter, they feel great tides and currents seize them and sweep them off their feet and far out into vast deeps, where they can but throw up their hands and sink. And yet they do bring home to us something of the wonder of it all; do make us see it somewhat from God's side. Look! they cry, look! and, following their pointing finger, can't you see that stolid knot of soldiery haughtily pushing back that jeering, hooting crowd; and that tired Figure in the midst, how worn, how broken in body from the horrors of the iron-tipped Roman lash? See, they have laid the Cross upon the ground, have thrown Him down upon it. Ah! the nails run like fire through the sensitive flesh! See! they have lifted Cross and Victim and dunted it roughly into the socket. 'It is excruciating,' men cry in an agony, their faces all contorted, their hands clenched, maddened by what is really unbearable. 'It is excruciating!' And excruciating means the pains of crucifixion. And the slow sun sets, and the long day wanes, and the small group

of weeping women slip back to the city, and by and by the enemies, turning for one last bitter and exultant gibe, move off, chuckling at the poor imposture that they have stamped out; and, last of all, the troops tramp back to barracks, and the stars steal out, and look down coldly upon the dishonoured dead, hanging there on a convict's gibbet. And all that had to be before your heart could hear Christ say to you to-day, 'This is My body, everything I have, and it's all for you.'

Look! they cry, and, following their finger, can't you see, past the Cross, far out into the eternities—see God as He really is? How different from what we had conceived Him! With His face grey with an agony that He has borne from all eternity. So have we hurt Him by these sins of ours which worry us scarcely at all; so intolerable to Him is this outrage of evil we have introduced into His Universe. And yet, although we have so wounded Him, He loves us, clings to us, cannot give us up. Always He has been planning how to help us; always He has been thinking how to save us from ourselves; counting no cost, reckoning up no sacrifice, heedless what it means to Him if only we be plucked back from self-destruction. And all that lies behind that crumb of ordinary bread; all that is in it, could we see it from God's side of things. Take it, man, take it freely; it is meant expressly for you. But do not your hands tremble? For, to make that possible, Christ had to die, and God's heart had to break.

I saw this people as a field of flowers,
 Each grown at such a price,
 The sum of unimaginable powers
 Did no more than suffice.
 A thousand central daisies, they,
 A thousand of the one;
 For each the entire monopoly of day
 For each the whole of the devoted sun.

Free though it be to you, the cost of that was all God's all. The wonder and amazement of the facts, seen from God's side of them!

And, then, our attitude in view of them. As to that there can be no dubiety whatever. This is a day of God's own contriving, which only Divine grace made possible. We must be glad and rejoice in it. What else is even thinkable if we really believe this, accept this, credit that Christ means what He says.

Austerely beautiful although it be, the characteristic note of our Scottish Communion rings flat

in my ears, and out of harmony with the true spirit of the day. This is no time for grave and sombre melodies, but for happy faces and for happy hearts dazed and bewildered by the immensity of their own good fortune. 'Dear me, Dr. Duncan,' they said, for the old Hebrew Professor was striding along Princes Street in Edinburgh, his face aglow and shining, smiling to himself, cracking his fingers as he walked, 'you surely have great news to-day.' 'News!' he made answer. 'News! Wonderful news—the best of news! The blood of Jesus Christ still cleanseth from all sin.' So would we feel if we really believed this; if we were not doubting, not fearing, not spinning limiting conditions whereby we may be excluded, not wondering can it be really true, nor anything except accepting it. Our Lord tells us that the most speaking picture of a genuine Christian is a child, and the characteristic of a normal child is happiness. It can't keep still, must sing and dance for the sheer joy of life. And in the Testament there is a sound of singing almost everywhere. They are the gladdest and the gayest people in the world. And little wonder! Imagine what it must have been to be immured in an appalling German prison camp. Not a doubt some of them were admirably run, but there were instances that pass description. Think what it must have meant to be penned into one of these; to have never a kindly word or human touch, to be beaten and bullied, to be starved and miserable, to have to drag oneself, though desperately ill, to one's excessive toil, to have the very women spit at you: to see the populace, as happened in one dreadful case, when virulent disease broke out, standing at a safe distance screaming with laughter, as, tottering unsteadily, one dragged one's dead companions to the burial-place, and made shift with shaking limbs to scoop a shallow grave for them: to be in the power of hatred, and unable to escape from it; and this for weeks and months and years. And then to land in England, suddenly to find that nightmare gone, with kindly faces everywhere, and compassionate eyes, and ready, helping hands, eagerly leaping out to one's assistance; to be in an atmosphere of love and pride in one, and endless sympathy. That is the difference the faith made. People had thought that the Divine powers were hostile to us, must be hostile, because we have callously broken their laws. They tried desperately to forget; but,

when they remembered, they crouched and cringed and shivered, expecting that any moment Divine wrath might leap out and blast them. And at the Cross they saw that God's heart is entirely with us; that He has not one thought towards us that is not kindly and generous and unselfish. And with that the sun broke out, and winter vanished from the earth, and of a sudden spring with its glory and its song and its rejoicing was in these folk's hearts. And we must take that in, and credit it as true for us—that God has never a thought toward us that is not merciful and gracious and very pitiful. Chalmers was no great success as a visitor among his congregation. Gladstone tells us how he once went a round with him, and how the great soul entered each new house, sat smiling, but without a word, for he had no small change of conversation, rose up, and went his way, with almost nothing said. Yet on occasion he could be effective enough. There was a melancholious soul who could not be got to believe that God could really love her, had in very deed forgiven her. And one day he burst in on her. 'Madam,' he said, 'I've come to tell you God has no ill-will at you,' and was gone. God has no ill-will at us! He might well have! Remember how we have neglected Him, forgotten Him, wounded Him, been impudent and insolent day after day. I tell you if you had treated me as I have treated God I would hate you, loathe the thought of you, be filled with an ungovernable rage the moment you came into sight. 'If I were God,' cried Luther hotly, 'I would kick this wretched world to pieces.' But God is incapable of harbouring grudges, of ill-humour and temper and peevishness; forgets, blots it all out; begins again as hopefully and patiently as ever; loves on. Even Paul can't understand that in the very least, is taken aback and staggered. It seems so unreasonable, so impossible! Why should He, and how can He? If we had been kind of half decent—but to us—to us! Yet though he doesn't understand it, he believes it, accepts it, walks in the warm sunshine of it. And so must we. This is a day that only God could have contrived for us; let us be glad and rejoice in it. Dante tells us that in his grim journeyings he came upon some in an evil plight, and asked them why this had befallen them. Once, they explained, we were sad and gloomy and sour-humoured in God's beautiful earth. And while life holds much of tragedy for some of us,

and there are many things that hurt and stab these hearts of ours till some of us must bite our lips to keep from crying out in pain, still at Christ's Table to be grave of face and unexcited can only mean that we have not grasped and taken in all that this means, the wonder and amazement of it—from God's side of it, and from ours. When the West Indian slaves were liberated, they gathered on the momentous night into their churches and knelt there in prayer. But when the long-expected hour had at last actually struck, they leapt up to their feet, singing, rejoicing, and embracing one another, laughing in sheer happiness although the tears were running down their cheeks. Free! Free! Free! In such mood surely should we gather at Christ's Table, so awed, yet so exultant and so very happy. For we too, thank God, are free! This is a great day of God's own contriving for us; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

The amazement of the facts, our attitude in view of them, and, lastly, a practical use of them. For all this, that cost so much, must not be allowed to evaporate in a mere gush of feeling and emotion, like a Highland burn roaring in spate, and yet to-morrow shrunk again to the usual thin trickle whimpering, half-choked, among the bare, bleached stones. It must be condensed to action, into real and purposeful amendment of our characters and lives. Scholars tell us that this Psalm was probably a shout of thanksgiving for some great victory, for the happy conclusion of a war in which things had for long looked ominous and hopeless. They were flocking up into the Temple to give thanks to God, like ourselves upon Armistice Day, when, for a few hours, we were really a religious people, with a vivid almost overpowering sense of God; when in many places, even in the heart of mighty cities, one had only, without announcement, to open a church and ring a bell, and in a few minutes it was packed from floor to ceiling with folk eager to bring their offering of thanksgiving. So perhaps it was here. And yet you notice this man's prayer: 'O Lord, save us, we pray; O Lord, prosper us, we pray.' But were they not there just precisely because God had saved them, and had prospered them in ways unbelievable, and yet gloriously true! Did this man feel that face to face with this colossal proof and instance of the lengths to which God's grace can go, it were sheer folly not to seize on it for all their other needs—for all the national

sores, and all his personal weaknesses? O Lord, who can save so amazingly—save us from this, and this, and this, that still besets and threatens us: O Lord, who can bring success where it looked impossible—prosper us here, and here, and here, where we have failed, and lost heart, and ceased even to try. There is a moving scripture in which God, passing before Moses, proclaims Himself as the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. And we read how Moses hearing this made haste and, seizing on that proclamation, applied it instantly to his own wants and needs. If Thou art merciful and gracious, since Thou forgivest iniquity and sin, pardon our iniquity, forgive our sin.

So Paul, too, standing at the Cross, feels in his heart that this finally settles it, that if God has gone this length for us there is nothing that He will not grant us. If He has given us His Son, will He not freely give us anything and everything that we can need? Well, here are we, face to face with this bewildering proof of what God means when He says that He loves us, of the lengths to which He goes, of the bewilderments He does, let us make haste, and before we pass into the world and it all fades away, grows dim and far off, and an unreal, shadowy rumour blown vaguely to and fro about the world, let us apply it to our own case—this overwhelming grace, this so illimitable love, this immeasurable power to help—to our temper, our ill-humours, our touchiness, our engrained selfishness, to our besetting sins, to the temptations that have so often broken us that, daunted, we make small show of resistance now, slink tamely to heel, obedient to their first truculent whistle. Save us, O Thou whose name is Saviour, and who hast wonderfully and most surely earned Thy title,

save us from this, and this, and this; and prosper us in our endeavours to be done with our too fatally familiar self; to grow into Christ's mind and heart and characteristic ways, till, naturally and instinctively, we think His thoughts, and will His will, and live after His fashion. When the Lord Christ passed through a village everybody felt that here was a God-given and enormous opportunity that might not come again, and laid hold on it with both hands; clutched at Christ's power, applied it to their individual weaknesses, translated it into the terms of their own personal wants. The blind cried give me sight; the deaf pled make me hear; the impotent besought Him for strength to be done with helpless, weary lying—to stand up, to live a full, whole, interesting life, the life of a real man. And this is a day that God Himself has contrived for us, and we must make haste to appropriate it, use it, think it out, apply it to our individual and personal case. No doubt we are here to give Him thanks for an amazing act of condescension, for a fulness of grace that staggers us, and takes away the breath, and leaves one dazed and stunned, if we see it at all from God's side. But then, when a wise Psalmist felt like that, and came up to the Temple of set purpose to make some return to God for His bewildering goodness, thinking things out, he came to the conclusion that the truest gratitude is to be willing to accept still more. 'What shall I give to God for all His benefits?—I shall take,' he said. And Pope—found, of all men, among the prophets—tells us bluntly he was right. 'For God is paid, when man receives'; the way to thank Him is to take yet more, and more, and more.

The wonder and amazement of the facts! our attitude in view of them; a practical use of them! And so, let us sit down with the Master at His Table.

Recent Foreign Theology.

Theology and Religion.

THE firm of Hinrichs in Leipzig is issuing this year a new series of a monthly journal, known for more than thirty years as the *Kartell-Zeitung*. Its new title is *Theologische Blätter*, and its editor is

Dr. Karl Ludwig Schmidt, New Testament Professor in Giessen. A specimen copy, received from the publishers, makes a favourable impression, alike for the varied interest of its contents and the quality of its articles. Amongst the subjects treated at length are 'The History of the Synoptic Tra-