

is with the same sort of texts as we already possess in such astonishing abundance in the papyri, except that from the nature of things the texts or potsherds are generally shorter than those on papyrus. Most of the ostraca consist of receipts for taxes.

No less than 1624 of these humble documents of antiquity have been published by Ulrich Wilcken in the second book of his great work. Of these, 1355, not previously published, had been brought to light by himself, with immense pains, in the museums of Berlin, London, Paris, Rome, Turin, Leyden, etc.,¹ as well as in private collections. A task of the greatest difficulty awaited the editor in the decipherment of the cursive handwriting on these ostraca, elaborated as it often is to a grotesque degree and employing innumerable abbreviations and ligatures, but the acknowledged skill of the decipherer of the Berlin Papyri proved brilliantly equal to the demands made upon it. Thus these homely texts are now in the hands of scholars, not altogether freed from puzzles and mysteries, but available without any trouble for the purposes of research.

The ostraca are in a still greater degree than the papyri documents of the lower class of the popula-

¹ The University Library of Heidelberg also came into possession of a large collection of ostraca in 1905.

tion. The potsherd was the cheapest possible writing material, such as everybody could fetch for himself from the rubbish-heap free of cost. The ostrakon was therefore considered below the social dignity of well-to-do people; and it is interesting to note how in many Coptic letters that are written on potsherds² the writers beg their correspondents to excuse their having to use an ostrakon for want of papyrus. The embarrassment of these polite persons is matter of congratulation for us, for the ostraca lead us into the very midst of the class of society in which Primitive Christianity took root.

Having given a short account of our texts, we will now proceed to place our venerable Holy Book beside the open pages of the folios that deal with the inscriptions, the papyri, and the ostraca. We are thus restoring the New Testament from its Western exile to its Eastern home, taking it from the domain of our modern civilization, that has founded hundreds of professorial chairs for the learned exposition of this one small Book, and placing it again in the society of unlearned and unsophisticated men. Let us hear what these witnesses from the society in which the New Testament had its origin have to say to the scholar who makes that Book his study.

² Cf. Crum, *Coptic Ostraca*, p. 97.

For Mine Own Sake.

BY THE REV. C. S. MACALPINE, B.D., MANCHESTER.

'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake (כַּדְּעָלַי), and will not remember thy sins.'—Isa. xliii. 25.

This is a text which might be, and in fact by many preachers practically is, transferred bodily from the Old to the New Testament. It is one of the sunlit peaks of the O.T. Revelation, perhaps the highest of them all, from which the saint of old could see across into the Promised Land he was not privileged to enter. It is a word instinct with the life and with the love of God.

We may be justified—I think we are—in throwing back on this great passage the light of fuller revelation. But we shall be better able to do that rightly if we understand its place and meaning in the Old Testament.

Of the fact that God forgives sin there can be no doubt in the mind of any believing reader of the Bible. The wonder of the fact becomes every day more wonderful to the devout heart. The abundance of the Divine forgiveness is witnessed by a thousand passages of Scripture, among which this text has ever held a foremost place. But *why* God forgives, with all the light the Scriptures throw upon it, remains a mystery still,—indeed, a deepening mystery as we get to understand sin and to know ourselves. The phrase 'for mine own sake' lifts a little corner of the veil and helps us to know, even if we can hardly say that it helps us

to understand—for who can understand God?—one of the deepest reasons, one of the strongest motives, of the Divine mercy.

A study of some of the passages in which the Hebrew preposition לְמַעַן (l'mā-'ān), 'for the sake of,' occurs, will help us to understand the force with which it is here used. Perhaps the simplest method will be to notice first those in which it is used, either by God or by others, otherwise than of God Himself; then those in which it is used indirectly of God; and finally, those in which it is used of God directly. This will lead us step by step up to the text and nearer to the Divine mind and heart.

I. *Passages in which the Preposition is used otherwise than of God.*

These need detain us but a moment. In 1 K 11^{12, 13, 34} and in several other passages (1 K 15¹, 2 K 8¹⁰), we see God restraining His wrath against Solomon and later kings 'for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, which I have chosen.' The same restraining force is shown in Is 65⁸. A corresponding constraining force is mentioned in Is 45⁴, 'For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel my chosen, I have called thee by thy name,' etc.; and in Is 62¹, 'For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace,' etc. And we find the same thought in the appeal to God in Is 63¹⁷, 'O Lord . . . return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.' In each of these passages we see God restrained from wrath against His people, or constrained to action for them, by His regard for others whose remembrance was dear to Him. This was *the motive* of His conduct.

II. *Passages in which the Preposition is used of God indirectly.*

These also are few, but they are very instructive.

The reign of Jehoahaz was a disastrous one for the kingdom of Israel. The king set an evil example to his people: the anger of God was kindled. At the hand of Hazael, king of Syria, disaster after disaster fell on the land. 'But the Lord was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, *because of his covenant* with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet' (2 K 13²³).

They had forfeited every right that might have been theirs under that covenant, but the faithful God could not wholly let go the people to whose fathers He had bound Himself by a solemn pledge.

A wider thought meets us in Is 42²¹: 'It pleased the Lord *for his righteousness' sake*, to magnify the law and make it honourable.' These two great words, 'law' and 'righteousness,' which for our present purpose are the main words of the sentence, are both of deep and pregnant meaning. Law is תּוֹרָה (tōrā), instruction, teaching, and covers the whole range of Divine revelation and guidance, by priest and lawgiver and prophet, through which God unveiled Himself and His purposes to man. Whether we regard the Divine תּוֹרָה in its wonderful extent or in its no less wonderful depth and majesty, God has indeed 'made the teaching great and glorious' (R.V. marg.). And this, the prophet tells us, He has done 'for his righteousness' sake.' Righteousness is constantly in the O.T. ascribed to God: it is one of His especial characteristics. It shows Him to us, on the one hand, as self-consistent, in harmony with the full and true conception of what God must be; and, on the other hand, in relation to men, as in all His dealings true to Himself and to His declared purpose. The 'righteousness' of God is here His manifestation of Himself, His steadfast and consistent purpose, and it includes, not only the sterner aspects which we associate with the word, but also those gentler aspects known to us as 'grace.' In pursuance of this 'righteousness,' steadfast and true to His purpose, however unworthy His people might be, God had sent to Israel a constant succession of prophets and teachers, with an ever widening and deepening revelation of His will. And perhaps nowhere do we see 'the teaching' more great and glorious than in this great prophecy of the Second Isaiah.

We come to more familiar ground in the appeal of the Psalmist (44²⁶): 'Rise up for our help, and redeem us *for thy lovingkindness' sake*.' This word 'lovingkindness,' חֶסֶד (hēsēdh), is one of a group of words which from different points of view speak of the graciousness, the mercifulness, the lovingness of God. To this, as to the strongest, surest motive of the Divine action, the oppressed, downhearted Psalmist appeals on behalf of himself and his fellow-sufferers, and we may be certain that he did not appeal in vain (cf. Ps 25⁷).

III. *Passages in which the Preposition is used of God more directly.*

Here we group together those passages in which the phrase, 'for my (thy, his) name's sake,' occurs. They are more than a dozen, but it will suffice to quote a few, specially significant and representative. Half of them have to do with God's gracious dealings towards His rebellious and sinful people.

In two passages of this group there is a remarkable parallelism which helps to the interpretation of the whole. 'Do not abhor us, for thy name's sake; do not disgrace the throne of thy glory: remember, break not thy covenant with us' (Jer 14²¹); 'Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: And deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake' (Ps 79⁹). These are words of souls deeply conscious of sin; they cry to God for forgiveness and mercy on the ground that to deal otherwise with them would bring dishonour on, or be unworthy of, His name. A bold appeal indeed, but it is the boldness of those whom God Himself has taught. For the name of God is 'used as a succinct expression for the revealed character of God, for all that is known of Him' (Hastings' *B.D.* vol. iii. p. 478, col. 1), and the appeal carries us back to the great declaration of Ex 34^{6f.}: 'The Lord, the Lord, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.' It brings us down from that through the long history of God's beloved, but often rebellious, people, which shows Him as ever the same merciful, forgiving God.

Compare with this that great appeal to Israel (Ezk 20), where three times over God says of the past: 'I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations' (vv. 8, 14, 22); and once again of the future: 'Ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have wrought with you for my name's sake, not according to your evil ways, nor according to your evil doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord God' (v. 44). We can picture to ourselves the unholy triumph of 'the nations' had God, who had proclaimed Himself the God of Israel and made to them such glorious promises, cast off His rebellious people. The honour of His name moved Him to a pardon and a long-suffering which they had little deserved. This is the motive which gives us the

key to Israel's history. Nor is it an unworthy, a selfish motive, as, expressed in human speech, which is necessarily insufficient to show forth God, it may easily seem to be. For dishonour to God is disaster to man.

IV. *Passages in which the Preposition is used of God directly.*

These are few. One is our text. The others are Is 48¹¹, Dn 9¹⁹ (which suggest the point of contact with the group of passages last considered), and 2 K 19³⁴. There is also a parallel passage in Ezk 36³², 'Not for your sake do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you.'

This expression covers the whole ground of the former group. But does it not carry us one step further? Does it not suggest at least a deeper truth, a wider range of thought as to God's forgiving love? The phrase is absolute and unconditioned. It is not 'for my covenant's sake—that to which I have pledged myself,' nor 'for my name's sake—that which I have made known of myself,' but 'for mine own sake—that which I am.' And so it seems to bring us one step nearer to the heart of God. For while God is indeed all that He has revealed Himself to be, He is also a great deal more, which is hidden from us, but known to Him. And on the ground of all that He is, God declares that He will and does forgive sin. Much that the great prophet knew not has been made known to us in Christ, and we can say, as no O.T. saint could say it, 'God is love.' But even Christ has not shown us the full depths of the Divine nature, for we are not capable of comprehending it. And how clearly soever, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we may see Christ, and in Him see the Father, there remain beyond, and must ever remain, deep things in God which no human eye can search nor any human heart understand. And all this is involved in God's great saying: 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions *for mine own sake*, and will not remember thy sins.'

There is no need to say much, in conclusion, as to the perfect harmony of this view of the text with the N.T. teaching regarding the Atonement. The same pen that wrote 'God is love' wrote also 'He is the propitiation for our sins.' The two truths are one. Some indeed have thought that

the death of Christ was necessary to awaken in God love to man; others, no less crudely, that if 'God is love,' there is no need of an atoning sacrifice. But the Cross of Christ is at once the fullest expression of the love of God, of which our text speaks so grandly, and the means by which that boundless love can satisfy itself in man's salvation. In the words of the present Bishop of Durham, God 'has provided in Him an expiation which . . . does not persuade Him to have mercy, for He is eternal love already, but liberates His love along the line of a wonderfully satisfied Holiness, and explains that liberation (to the contrite) so as

supremely to win their worship and their love to the Father and the Son. Behold the Christ of God; behold the blood of Christ' ('Romans,' *Expositor's Bible*, p. 95).

'God is love.' Christ is 'the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance.' The N.T. is the splendid, but still partial, unveiling of the riches that lie hidden in the 'for mine own sake' of the text. But for the child of God there is coming a day of yet fuller knowledge and more adoring gratitude, when 'God is love' shall mean to him infinitely more than it can mean to-day.

At the Literary Table.

THE SUBCONSCIOUS.

THE SUBCONSCIOUS. By Joseph Jastrow, Professor of Psychology in the University of Wisconsin. (*Constable*. 10s. net.)

THE subject that is most attractive at the present time to the student of the Gospels is the consciousness of Jesus. The subject that is most attractive to the student of psychology is our own unconsciousness. The two topics have emerged together not by accident. Students both of psychology and of the Gospels are beginning to see that in the consciousness of Jesus there is something of that which we call unconsciousness in ourselves. His uniqueness, they begin to say, was first of all a psychological uniqueness. He was unique because He had at His command things which come to us only in dreams, or touch us bafflingly as forgotten memories—memories of experiences which we are not sure if we have ever had. So the study of our own unconsciousness is a fascinating, and may yet become a profitable, study for the student of the Gospels.

But the psychologist does not speak of unconsciousness now, he speaks of 'the subconscious.' And the study of the subconscious has made such progress that Professor Jastrow believes himself able to write its scientific manual. What the difference is between consciousness and the subconscious may perhaps be seen from this quotation which he makes from Dr. Maudsley: 'When Luther saw the Devil enter his chamber at Witten-

berg, and instantly flung the inkstand at his head, he seems to have been neither horrified nor greatly surprised, and to have resented the visit rather as an intrusion which he had expected from an adversary with whom he had had many encounters; but had the Devil really surprised Luther by walking into his chamber, I doubt whether he would have been so quick and energetic in his assault.'

This occurs in the middle of the volume. Before it and behind it there are many illustrations of the subconscious state, and many wise reflexions upon them. They are illustrations and reflexions, however, rather than rules and scientific regulations. Most of the illustrations are taken from dreams, and although much is now known about dreams that our fathers never dreamed of, Professor Jastrow is not able to show that everything in them is done decently and in order. Nor is it so much that the borderland is not clearly defined between science and empiricism. It is rather that no confident distinction is drawn between sense and absurdity—a much more serious matter.

For instance, speaking of the variants of dream-consciousness, Professor Jastrow says: 'I must remind the reader of Dr. Holmes' account: "The veil of eternity was lifted. The one great truth, that which underlies all human experience, and is the key to all the mysteries that philosophy has sought in vain to solve, flashed upon me in a sudden revelation. Henceforth all was clear: a few words had lifted my intelligence to the level of the knowledge of the cherubim. As my natural