

passages, such as 2 S 5<sup>10</sup>, where it first appears in the Bible, the name Yahweh Zebaoth points to Yahweh's warlike might and victoriousness, which was especially represented by the ark. In successive subsequent ages it came to refer to Him as the Ruler of the forces of Nature, the Almighty and Holy One, the One Governor of the nations, the Being who is supreme over the angelic hosts.

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## Among the Periodicals.

### The Prologue to the Fourth Gospel.

DR. VAN HOONACKER contributes to the *Revue d'Histoire ecclésiastique* (January 1901) an article on the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel, in which he puts forward some views which are novel, but which, he considers, introduce a parallelism and establish a logical connexion in the Prologue, which it lacks as usually interpreted. In particular, the author discovers a parallelism between the natural light (Jn 1<sup>3-5</sup>) and the supernatural light, the Word (vv. 9<sup>ff.</sup>). In v. 9 it is often supposed

that the light in comparison with which Jesus is called the *true* light (τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν) is John the Baptist; but this seems to Dr. van Hoonacker quite inept after the express statement of v. 8 'he was not the light.' No, the contrast is between the natural phenomenon of light, which shines in the darkness, and which the darkness cannot retain or arrest (οὐ κατέλαβεν), and the *true* light, which, in spite of the darkness amidst which it first manifests itself, is the author of spiritual life to the children of God. In connexion with this interpretation, Dr. van Hoonacker, in agreement with the Abbé Loisy, alters the punctuation of vv. 3-4, so as to read, 'All things came into existence by Him, and without Him came nothing into existence. As for that which came into existence, in it was life, and the principle of this life was the light of men' [*i.e.* the light in which men walk, the light so called by men, the material light]. Now, just as light is the life of the natural world, so the true light, which lighteneth every man, came into the world, and, in spite of the darkness, became the principle of life in the supernatural order of things.

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## Our Lord's Hard Saying to the Syro-Phœnician Woman.

MATTHEW XV. 21-28; MARK VII. 24-30.

BY THE REV. DAVID SMITH, M.A., TULLIALLAN.

THIS is certainly one of the most puzzling incidents in the story of our Lord's earthly ministry. His behaviour here appears strangely and painfully out of character. It would excite no surprise were it related of one of the Rabbis, and we would take it as an example of Jewish exclusiveness, and contrast the large comprehensiveness of our Lord's attitude to the heathen. But what is our dismay when we hear such language from the lips of Jesus Himself, and see Him behaving to this poor heathen precisely as a Pharisee might have done! The historicity of the incident is beyond suspicion; for not only is it vouched for by the double authority of Matthew and Mark, but it is inconceivable that a story, so apparently improb-

able should be a forgery. Its very incredibility is an argument for its authenticity.

One feels instinctively that there must be some explanation of behaviour so alien to the manner of our Lord and so contrary to the spirit of His Gospel, which recognizes no distinction between Jew and Greek, but embraces every child of Adam with impartial love. And commentators have pointed out several considerations which go a certain way toward alleviating the apparent harshness. (1) Jesus, it is argued, was not obeying here the promptings of His heart, but accommodating Himself to the requirements of His mission. He had a definite method in the work of redemption, and He faithfully adhered to it, developing it

in due course and taking each step in order. It was the method which He has explained in His Parable of the Leaven. His design was to plant the Gospel in Israel as in the heart of humanity, and leave it to spread until it should permeate the whole mass. His salvation was for the world, but His business in the meantime was with Israel alone. 'I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' It would have been a premature anticipation had He at this stage taken to do with the heathen.

(2) His harshness was only assumed; and He had two ends in view when He put on this mask of churlishness. He desired, on the one hand, to try the woman's faith and make its triumph the more signal; and, on the other hand, to show the disciples what even an heathen was capable of, and thus conquer their Jewish prejudice and prepare them for the revelation of His world-wide purpose of salvation. One may feel that this interpretation invests the incident with a somewhat theatrical air, yet it is surely preferable to the view which regards our Lord as here awaking for the first time to consciousness of His universal mission. It is less than reverent, nor is it consistent with facts, to suppose that He had hitherto shared the narrow prejudices of His time and race, and now had it borne in upon Him, to His surprise and delight, that the heathen also were worthy of His grace.

(3) It has been pointed out that, though our Lord speaks after the insolent Jewish fashion: *haec enim Jesus ex publico Judaeorum affectu dixit, qui se solos Deo charos et sanctos judicabant, caeteros omnes canum habebant loco* (Erasmus), nevertheless the word He uses is not *κύνες*, but *κύνια*—a diminutive of endearment, it is supposed, denoting not the unclean pariah dogs which prowled about and fed on garbage, but the little pet dogs which played about the table at meal times and got occasional scraps from their masters. It may be so, yet it is quite as likely that it is a diminutive of *contempt*, and means 'wretched curs.' The word seems to occur only thrice in the classics, and in one of these passages (Plato, *Euthyd.* 298D) it is certainly contemptuous.

Whatever force there may be in these considerations, the harshness is only softened and not removed. It is with pleasure, therefore, that one welcomes yet another consideration which seems to have escaped notice hitherto, and which takes

all the sting out of our Lord's words, and transforms the seeming insult into a good-humoured pleasantry. He had left Jewish insolence behind Him when He crossed the northern border and passed into the parts of Tyre and Sidon, and it was not in all His thoughts, nor could it be in the thoughts of that poor heathen woman. It was not the brutal epithet of Pharisaic prejudice that He employed, but a familiar proverb. The Greeks had a saying, *σεαυτὸν οὐ τρέφων κύνας τρέφεις*, 'You starve yourself and feed dogs.' 'It was said,' Erasmus explains in his *Adagia*, 'of one who, while too poor to procure the necessaries of life, endeavoured to maintain an establishment of horses or servants. It will be appropriately employed against those who, by reason of the narrowness of their means, have scarce enough to sustain life, yet ambitiously endeavour to emulate the powerful and wealthy in fineness of dress and general ostentation. In short, it will be suitable to all who regard the things which belong to pleasure or magnificence, neglecting the things which are more necessary. Surely the first regard is due to necessaries, and the second to style; as if one should labour at the acquisition of learning, careless of the risk his life is running.'

It is more than likely that it was this proverb, and not the brutal epithet wherewith the Jews branded the Gentiles, that our Lord had in His thoughts when He said, 'It is not right to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs.' It is a playful reply, though it had beneath it the deep and gracious purpose of testing and strengthening the suppliant's faith. It is as though He had said, 'You are a stranger to Me, and why should I give away to a stranger the blessings which belong to those of My own household?'

And now observe the woman's reply. It also is a proverb, as appears from a passage in Philostratus (*Vita Apoll. Tyan.* i. 19). Apollonius was attended wherever he went by an admiring disciple, Damis of Nineveh, who served as his Boswell, recording his movements, his actions, and his discourses, and taking note even of little things, and *obiter dicta* (εἴ τι καὶ παρεφθέγγατο). Once some one sneered at him for this. 'When you collect such trifles, you are acting just like the dogs which eat the scraps that fall from the feast (τὰ ἐκπίπτοντα τῆς δαιρός).' 'If there be feasts of gods,' answered Damis, 'and gods eat, certainly

hey have also attendants who see to it that even the scraps (*τὰ πίπτοντα*) of ambrosia are not lost.' Here we have the very figure, almost the very language, of the woman's reply: 'Yea, Lord; for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the table of their masters.' The resemblance is too close to be accidental, and it is most reasonable to recognize the words as a familiar proverb. Have they not indeed a proverbial ring? The woman answers proverb with proverb, pleasantry with pleasantry.

Now it may seem that this new interpretation only substitutes one difficulty for another. It relieves us indeed from the necessity of imputing to the gentle Jesus the insulting language of Jewish bigotry, but in the unhappy circumstances was not banter well-nigh as cruel as insult? He meets the prayer of the grief-stricken mother with playful raillery; and what was this but mockery of her sorrow? What was such 'patching of grief with proverbs' but to 'charm ache with air, and agony with words'? And how should she have replied to such untimely jesting? Surely after the fashion of the nobleman, when Jesus met his request that He should come down to Capernaum and heal his dying son with the rebuke: 'Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe.' 'Sir,' he

cried, vexed and impatient, 'come down ere my child die!' The woman, however, answers raillery with raillery. Was not her behaviour as unnatural as His was cruel?

It may suffice for the removal of this difficulty to observe the circumstances more narrowly. There was indeed raillery in our Lord's reply, but there was no flippancy. There would be a twinkle in His eyes as He spoke, but, neither in look nor in tone, the faintest suggestion of mockery; and the poor mother would read the kindness of His heart in His gentle face. Nor, though the situation was distressing, was it at all desperate. The nobleman's son was dying; but this poor girl was a lunatic, and it was no question of life or death. And there was a world of difference in temperament between the nobleman of Capernaum and the Syro-Phœnician woman. He was an unsmiling Jew, a stranger to 'the saving grace of humour'; whereas she was a Greek, nimble of fancy and keen of wit, delighting in quips and cranks, and responding, even in the midst of sorrow, to a playful assault. Our Lord's treatment of her is an instance of His wondrous insight into human character. At a glance He perceived what was in every one He had to do with, and knew exactly how to handle him.

## At the Literary Table.

### THE BOOKS OF THE MONTH.

IS CHRIST INFALLIBLE AND THE BIBLE TRUE? BY THE REV. HUGH M'INTOSH, M.A. (*T. & T. Clark.* 8vo, pp. 708. 9s.)

So great at present is the interest in the authority of Scripture that everything that is written upon it will be read. This is an immense book. It is full of repetition. But it will be read. No one will call it too big; no one will be disturbed at the repetition in it.

Mr. M'Intosh knows that there is repetition in it. He knows and makes not an apology. 'I appreciate the force of Thomas Carlyle's principle, and Dr. Thomas Chalmers' practice, that there is no figure of speech worth using except repetition in various forms.' He knows also that his book is very big. He only wishes it were bigger. For

this is a great subject, and he is full of its greatness.

Two questions are asked on the title page. The first is subordinate in the book to the second. Mr. M'Intosh does ask if Christ is infallible, but either he feels that the answer to that question is covered by the answer to the other, or else he does not think that question is burning yet. The question really asked and answered is the second, 'Is the Bible true?'

Now Mr. M'Intosh is not an old-fashioned traditionalist. His teacher was Professor Robertson Smith. From him he received his doctrine of Scripture, and he abides by that doctrine without faltering. He is even (but *with* some faltering) a follower of the higher criticism. He believes