

'The Way and the Truth and the Life.'

OUR Lord spoke the words in answer to Thomas's question, 'How can we know the way?' Why did He say, 'I am the Way *and the Truth and the Life*'? Why did He not simply answer, 'I am the Way'? Mr. Neil, with knowledge of Oriental modes of speech, replies, that that is what He did say, only He defined the *kind* of Way by calling it the True and Living Way. An Oriental would express the True and Living Way by 'The Way and the Truth and the Life,' using the usual figure of hendiadys.

Some notes appeared on that in March. The Rev. Alexander Brown of Aberdeen (the author of the acceptable Commentary on the Apocalypse entitled *The Great Day of the Lord*) doubts Mr. Neil's interpretation. He does not reject hendiadys from the New Testament; he does not think it is found in this verse. Here is the essential matter of his contribution:—

Why does Christ add 'the Truth and the Life'? Are the words not irrelevant and distracting? No, they are a part of the answer, so far in the way of amplification. The way to the Father can be revealed to us in two forms; it may be spoken or taught to us as a truth, and it may in addition be lived before us as a life. We have no very distinctive doctrine of the transit from earth to immortality in the teaching of Christ, only meagre hints and incidental assertions of fact; but what is much better, when the scholars are crassly ignorant and full of mistaken presuppositions, the whole truth was taught in His own unique personality, and the doctrine of the Church was deduced therefrom by the apostles, especially by St. Paul.

Then, last of all, we see in Christ that the way to the Father is a life. First of all, as we see in Christ, it is a life of faith, of sonship, of communion with God. Alongside this moral life there is in process an evolution of the inward nature in the direction of greater spirituality. Witness the Transfiguration scene. Glorification proceeds *pari passu* with sanctification. Paul reduces the typical experience of Christ to a common doctrine when he writes: 'God quickeneth our mortal bodies by His Spirit which dwelleth in us.' Through this unseen process we move on towards our 'adoption, to wit, the redemption of

our body.' In that terminus, we go to the Father, and our life of faith on earth, like Christ's, has evolved itself into a glorified and beautified life in the presence of God.

Surely this was a worthy answer to Thomas's perplexity; and would it not be a misfortune if such a wealth of meaning were to suffer reduction into the redundant and comparatively meaningless phrase—'I am the true and living way'?

Now, remembering Mr. Brown's ability, and all the able sermons that have been preached upon this text, admitting also the 'wealth of meaning' in the words themselves—for Jesus *is* the Truth and the Life whether He says so here or not—we still feel that Mr. Neil's interpretation is most likely.

The Revised Version.

WE are obliged to correspondents who have kindly sent the names of works and pamphlets leading up to, or handling in any way, the Revised Version. Our thanks are especially due to the Rev. George Milligan, B.D., of Caputh, whose father, the late Professor Milligan of Aberdeen, was a member of the New Testament Company of Revisers, and whose own account of the Revised Version in his admirable Guild Text-Book is a model of conciseness and accuracy. Professor Davison of Handsworth specially recommends Humphrey's *Commentary on the Revised Version of the New Testament*, S.P.C.K., 1888.

Are there other contributors who can mention books or pamphlets on the subject?—EDITOR.

The Knocking Saviour.

REV. iii. 20.

THANKS are due to Dr. Dunlop Moore for calling attention, in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES for April, to the above well-known passage. His article starts our thoughts along a new line. Unfortunately, as we think, he leaves the main line at a certain point and runs on a branch line. By so doing, the unity, the continuity of idea, of the message to the Laodicean Church is broken. This message was sent to saints, not to sinners—to the professed followers of our Lord, not to the ungodly world. Not to 'scattered' saints, but to saints in church-

fellowship in Laodicea. A fulness, beauty, and fitness were seen in the passage under consideration as soon as it was recognised that the 'door' was not the *heart*, but 'the door of a house.' One commentator at least (Barnes) speaks of the door of a house, and then runs off to the door of the heart. But why the door of either the heart or a house? To speak of the door of a house diverts attention from the collective members of the Laodicean Church to the individual of the home. The passage forms part of an address to a body of people who composed a church. It was with the Church as a whole that our Lord had a controversy. It seems that Christ in this figurative representation speaks of standing, not at the door of the heart or of a house, but at the door of a place or building in which the members of the Laodicean Church were assembled. To knock at a door is to arrest the attention of the inmates of the building. Having done this, Christ wished His 'voice' to be heard. Does not the phrase 'hear My voice' point to the words of the message spoken by Christ and then sent to the Laodiceans? The blessings promised were conditioned not by the hearing of the knock simply, but by the hearing of the voice and the opening of the door. Effectual hearing involves obedience. If the church addressed had reformed, that would have constituted a proper hearing of the knock and the voice, and an opening of the door. On such conditions 'He makes, in symbolic language, a proposal to one and all of them of peace and friendship.' True, 'to one and all'; but not to one and all in their several homes, but as a church. When Christ meets His people at their feasts of love, or at His supper-table, which is His and also theirs, then He sups with them, and then they specially enjoy the Real Presence. If the Church as a whole refuse to reform, the individual who reforms will not be deprived of Christ's peace and friendship. We stand or fall as individuals, although we form part of a church. This may be the reason why our Lord said, 'If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me.' The view here suggested has the advantage of continuity of thought throughout. It retains the 'amazing condescending grace,' and is true to 'Christian experience,' to which Dr. Moore calls attention. Are there not churches to-day in danger of being rejected? Have we not also known churches once

in danger, but in which reformation has taken place? Having 'an ear,' they have heard 'what the Spirit saith to the churches.' Dr. Moore will pardon us for this reference to his suggestive article.

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St. Paul before the Chiliarch.

THE passage (Acts xxiii. 6, 7) records an instance of St. Paul availing himself of a difference amongst the Sanhedrists, in an effort to secure his personal liberty. The question arises, How far can St. Paul be justified in doing so? And the further inquiry is suggested, 'How far can we, consistently, follow his example?

It was evident, almost at the very outset of the trial, that the apostle could not reasonably hope for justice, for the high priest commanded those that stood by him to smite St. Paul on the mouth. This indication of a settled determination to condemn the apostle must be taken into full account in any serious effort to treat with fairness the subsequent action.

Briefly stated, the apostle made a successful attempt to distract the attention and divide the counsel of the Sanhedrin, trusting his personal safety to the protection of the Roman power.

The method adopted by St. Paul was (1) to proclaim himself a Pharisee, and (2) to give a definite point to his contention with the Jewish Council, by declaring that he was on trial because he preached 'the hope and the resurrection of the dead.'

In regard to the first point, it may be asked, Was St. Paul now a Pharisee? He had, long since, ceased to identify himself with that sect. Moreover, he had acquired an unparalleled eminence as a denouncer of their system of self-righteousness; he had held up to the execration of the world their love for vain ostentation, their blind conformity to rites and ceremonies, and their shallow and hypocritical lives. He had stigmatised, with relentless perseverance, their regard for absurd traditions. He had scornfully denounced their faith as false and ruinous. But still the great apostle declares, 'I am a Pharisee!' Surely he could not be a Pharisee in the ordinary acceptance of the term. He preached a doctrine, and lived a life, diametrically contrary to the accepted canons of Pharisaic creed and rules of