

THE RIGHT INTERPRETATION OF WHAT ARE CALLED 'IMPRECATIONS' IN THE PSALMS.

Psalm cix 5—14.

"Set thou an ungodly man to be ruler over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand.  
 "When sentence is given upon him, let him be condemned: and let his prayer be turned into sin.  
 "Let his days be few: and let another take his office.  
 "Let his children be fatherless: and his wife a widow.  
 "Let his children be vagabonds, and beg their bread: let them seek it also out of desolate places.  
 "Let the extortioner consume all that he hath: and let the stranger spoil his labour.  
 "Let there be no man to pity him: nor to have compassion upon his fatherless children.  
 "Let his posterity be destroyed: and in the next generation let his name be clean put out.  
 "Let the wickedness of his fathers be had in remembrance in the sight of the Lord: and let not the sin of his mother be done away.  
 "Let them always be before the Lord: that he may root out the memorial of them from off the earth."

Many persons have great reluctance to join in the reading of the above passage. There seems, in the language used, to be something so at variance with that spirit and disposition which are inculcated by the principles of the Gospel, that they feel unwilling to utter the words and make them their own.

Yet this proceeds from ignorance respecting them. These verses contain not imprecations, but predictions; not wishes for ill by man against man, but solemn declarations of righteous vengeance by the prophet of the Most High, against wickedness of the worst kind.

We are led to a just application of them by a part of of them being quoted as fulfilled in Judas, the betrayer of our holy Lord. The whole passage should be read, as it was meant to be written, prophetically; and they need not be repugnant to the tenderest heart, when it is considered that it is not calling down of curses by man (which would be inconsistent with the Gospel), but a declaration of punishment justly due for foreseen abominable wickedness.

These remarks are applicable not only to the above passage, but also to some verses in Psalm lxi.,—from the twenty-third to the thirtieth,—and to others also; and I am induced to make them in consequence of a little incident which lately occurred within my own knowledge.

An elderly lady was in the habit of reading aloud, with some portion of her family, the Psalms appointed for the day. Whenever she came to the above passage, she was accustomed to pass over it, in consequence of what seemed to her its unchristian spirit, and its unsuitableness to the purpose of promoting that holy disposition which, by these exercises, she was anxious to promote. But one day, a little grand-daughter, who was frequently present, said to her mamma, "Mamma, do you believe the Bible?" "Yes, my dear." "All of it?" "Yes, all of it." "Not all of it, mamma." "Yes, every word of it, my dear: it is God's own word." "Why do you and grandmamma leave out those verses in the Psalms, then?"

If the purport of these verses has hitherto been misunderstood by any of your readers, and they have been thought to be an outpouring of a vindictive spirit by David, instead of a declaration of future wrath upon the worst enemies of God, it may not have been amiss that these few lines have been written, in order to give a more correct understanding of them. The explanation may prevent the omission of the passage in private use, and the creating such an impression on the mind of the young as is exemplified above. And is not the anecdote related another illustration of the truth, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, thou hast ordained strength."

PROFESSION WITHOUT PRINCIPLE.—"All you can tell me," said one on a dying bed, "I have long well known; but I tell you that I have lived without real religion: I was forward in the Church, but fixed in the world, and my profession only now serves to terrify me."

POETRY.

THE FRIENDSHIP OF THE WORLD.

Hast thou gone to the world, and tried its power,  
 When thy soul was bowed down with its load of cares?  
 And what didst thou meet in that darken'd hour—  
 Has it soothed thy sorrow, and dried thy tears?  
 Did it meet thee with love, in that time of woe,  
 And give to thy troubled spirit rest?  
 Did kindness and sympathy gently flow,  
 In healing balm, o'er thy stricken breast?  
 Did it leave its gay revels, and come to thine aid,  
 To cheer thy deep gloom with its winning smiles?  
 Did it quit the bright sun-shine, and seek the dark shade,  
 To dispel every cloud by its magic wiles?  
 No—it coldly looked on as the mourner passed by;  
 It held no communion with anguish and grief:  
 Its aspect was chilling—no beam from that eye  
 Gave a glimmer of hope, or a glance of relief!  
 But what didst thou meet at the throne of thy God,  
 When the voice of thy mourning ascended on high?  
 Wert thou harshly repulsed from that glorious abode,  
 And left in thy hopeless despondence to die?  
 That theme is too mighty—it scars from our reach;  
 The tongue of a seraph those mercies should tell—  
 The words should be uttered in heavenly speech,  
 For the lips of a mortal are bound by a spell!  
 A soft, gentle whisper just comes from below,  
 Like the voice of the Spirit—the life-giving Dove—  
 It exhales from that heart where those mercies o'erflow,  
 And breathes forth its tribute to Infinite Love!