

Our Contributors.

Our Lord's Use of the Old Testament Scriptures.

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The Gospel of Matthew contains nineteen quotations made by our Lord from the Old Testament, apart from the references to the Scriptures in the fifth chapter of this Gospel; the Gospel of Mark has fourteen quotations by the Lord; the Gospel of Luke has twelve; the Gospel of John has six. The quotations in Mark, however, are all found in Matthew; all in Luke, except three, are in the first Gospel, the six in John are all peculiar to Himself. We thus have in the record of the evangelists twenty-eight quotations—direct quotations apart from mere references—in the Lord's teaching. But the Apostle John says—what we can well believe—that we are far from having a complete account of all that the Lord did; we may, therefore, suppose that in the course of his ministry, many more quotations than those found in the four Evangelists occurred in Christ's discourses. The citations contained in the Gospels are, however, quite sufficient to illustrate the Lord's use of the Old Testament Scriptures, and his attitude towards them.

In referring to the purposes for which Scripture is quoted by the Lord, it is somewhat difficult to enumerate them under exact categories.

1. The Lord uses Scripture for the purpose of repelling temptation. In entering upon his ministry, he was tempted by the devil. In one of his temptations, the devil quotes Scripture to show that Jesus may safely and properly do what he suggests. The Lord in turn quotes, to convict his adversary of misapplying the divine Word; but each of the three temptations is repelled by an arrow drawn from the quiver of the Bible. Jesus will not change stones into bread, for "man shall not live by bread alone," he will not pay homage to the devil, "for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve;" he will not cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, because it is said, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Thus the Lord teaches us how to "stand against the wiles of the devil."

2. The Lord uses the Old Testament to corroborate his teaching and gain acceptance for it, and to vindicate his conduct. Not that the Lord's words needed confirmation for those who believed in him. To them Christ not only speaks the truth; he is the truth. But the majority of the Lord's hearers were not disciples; they were, or professed to be, disciples of Moses; and for them Scripture confirmation of what they heard from the Prophet of Galilee should have much value. If they believed Moses they would receive his words and justify his actions.

The Pharisees were scandalized because he ate with publicans and sinners. Jesus says to them, "Go and learn what this meaneth, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice.'" By the same Scripture he defends his disciples, who were accused of Sabbath breaking when they plucked and did eat the ears of corn.

He spake in parables, because his hearers were of those in whom the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled, "By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand," etc. When

the Pharisees would ensnare him touching the Mosaic law of divorce, he answers, "Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh?" On the basis of these facts he rests his command, "What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." When a legalist comes to him and asks, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" the Lord recites to him the commandments; implying, that to keep these in thought, word and deed would ensure eternal life. Thus Christ endorses the Decalogue as divinely perfect; though he is far from suggesting that his questioner could gain salvation through his observance of the law.

In reply to the Sadducees, the Lord finds the doctrine of the resurrection in the words, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Thus a doctrine which many have pronounced the Books of Moses to be ignorant of—a doctrine without which religion as a practical force cannot exist—is established at once, the Lord's interpretation teaching us that the very relation in which God stands to his people, as their God, carries in its bosom their triumph over death and all its results.

A lawyer tempts Christ, putting to him the famous question, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" By the Scriptures, the Lord decides the point: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind;" and again, by the same authority, he gives the second place to the love of our neighbor. Turning upon his questioners, the Lord demands of them: "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he?" They readily reply: "The Son of David;" and the Lord inquires of them how an authority which he and they both acknowledge, should say: "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet." But they have no answer, no solution.

I have thus referred, under this head, to a number of the passages in which the Lord appeals to the Scriptures; and they warrant us to say that he uses the Old Testament not only to defend himself and his disciples against captious Pharisees and Sadducees, lawyers and scribes, and to convict and silence these opponents, but as a permanent fountain of divine truth, a source of doctrine in theology and morals.

3. The Lord cites and refers to the Scriptures as prophetic of himself. To the writer of the Apocalypse, the angel said, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Prophecy, whether by angel or by man, points to Jesus. In all its parts and forms the prophetic message receives its fulfilment in Christ. He is ever in the heart of Old Testament prediction.

In the synagogue at Nazareth, he read from the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah, and applied these words to himself: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor," etc. He obviously means, not merely that his mission might be fitly described in the words of the prophet, but that the words were intended by the Spirit of God definitely to apply to him. There are passages quoted by

the Lord as descriptive of his own condition, which might properly be applied to the condition of others also; e.g., "They hated me without a cause;" though such passages find their fulfilment pre-eminently in him. But apart from such passages the Lord quotes prophecies as fulfilled in himself, where no other fulfilment is to be thought of. Among these may be classed his quotation from Psalm 118: "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner." "I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." The words of the twenty-second Psalm, uttered by the lips of the Saviour, on the cross, however applicable they may have been in other instances of extreme sorrow, were meant to find their true fulfilment in the sense of desertion experienced by the Redeemer. When the band sent to apprehend Jesus laid hold on him, he restrained Peter from using the sword, saying, "Thinkest thou not that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels? How then should the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?" There is no question; so that the reference is to the many predictions in Scripture of the Messiah's sufferings and death.

A Sabbath School Secretary.

To the Editor of THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN.—At the last Assembly the Sabbath School Committee asked for the appointment of a permanent S. S. Secretary. The Assembly named a committee to nominate a man, and to report this year. As the Presbyteries have not been consulted, it is but right that attention be drawn to the matter through the press.

Is there need for such an appointment? Is it wise to make one at this juncture? There are many who think not. They are opposed to it because they deplore a too evident movement away from the fundamental principle of Presbyterianism that work be done by Presbyteries and committees appointed year by year. But even those who have raised no objection to other appointments made in the past are not sure that there is need for this, or that the time is opportune. They feel that all the duties assigned to the Secretary (see Assembly Minutes p. 237) belong either to Presbytery Convenors, or to the Professors of Pastoral Theology in the Colleges. Why this work should be taken from them and given to one man is not clear. If any one man could undertake all those duties he would need to be a very versatile genius.

Why cannot the work be carried on as it is at present? [It is done satisfactorily. There are no complaints. Since the work of the S. S. Committee and Publications was separated there has been marked advance all along the line. The number of schools has increased by 830, and the number of scholars by 30,223. All departments of our S. S. work are effective. Why cannot they continue as at present? Why risk an appointment that may or may not be satisfactory, but which, when made, must continue?]

How are the expenses of such an appointment to be met? If paid like other secretaries his salary will be \$2,000 per annum, and this with an office, a clerk, and travelling expenses will cost at least \$3,000 per year. Are the coppers collected on Children's Day for the extension of S. S. work to be expended in this way? The expenses the Committee reported last year to Assembly were \$2,312 leaving a balance of \$4,650 to be divided among a number of needy schools. Is it now proposed to absorb this