

EXPOSITION.

"Let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican."—Matt. XVIII. 17.

WERE these words of Jesus spoken for Jew or Gentile? Plainly they were intended only to fit the Jew. Christ, then, in this anti-Pentecostal teaching, was only attending to the immediate needs of his hearers, and was not laying down laws for Jew and Gentile alike, and to be observed after Pentecost. But, as we have elsewhere shown, his language fits into his Pentecostal teaching perfectly, seeing it was all to be superseded by the advent of the Spirit as only teacher.

But what about the word *publican*? Was Jesus, in using this term, accommodating himself to the prejudices of his hearers, or what was its import in this connection? The feeling of dislike to the publican, on the part of the Jew, was intense. He was the outward sign of his country's subjugation to a foreign power.

That Jesus did not share this prejudice is abundantly evident, for, not only did the publicans hear him gladly, but he actually chose one of his apostles from that class.

We confess, therefore, that the word *publican* in this connection is to us obscure.

THE LEAST IN THE KINGDOM.

JESUS said, John the Baptist was the greatest of the prophets. He also said that the "least in the kingdom" was greater than John the Baptist.

He either meant something definite when he said this or he did not.

If the "least in the kingdom" was greater than John the Baptist, it must have been in some one or more respects.

It may have been that Jesus referred to John the Baptist's faith. When John sent to Jesus the question "Art thou he

that should come, or do we look for another?" is it possible that the great forerunner's faith was wavering? We ourselves incline to that opinion. At the same time we give ample scope and verge enough for another to differ in opinion from us, not only in this but in every other matter except the "walk in the Spirit." There cannot be two opinions here. And it is positively true that there are some things that there cannot be two opinions about and the christian standard be maintained. For instance, no one can be a Christian and disbelieve in God. Further, no one can remain Christian and reject God as a guide. Or if they with malice aforethought or afterthought either, for that matter, limit God in his guidance or substitute any person or thing in the universe as a guide they are just as completely heathen as the old Druidical Britons who substituted the sun for God and worshipped it on Sunday and the moon on Monday.

We say this substitution must be done knowingly. The Roman Catholic church, in Luther's time, erred to the extent that they rejected the greater light that we believe Luther learned directly from God. It is reported of Luther, we know not with what accuracy, that, as he was ascending on his knees a flight of steps, called Pilate's stair, scarcely had he reached midway when the text "the just shall live by faith" recurred to his mind.

Shocked at his own folly in undertaking to obtain by works what only can be obtained by faith, he arose from his knees and fled from the place with shame and humiliation. The pope's promise that whoever should climb this stair in this way should have his sins expiated, had no more attractions for Luther. God