

Mrs. Haldane dwelt, and found that, in spite of himself, he was sharing in her doubts and fears as to the future course of the erratic and impulsive youth at his side. He blamed himself for this, and tried to put doubt resolutely away. By a few earnest words he tried to shew the young man that only as the grace of God was daily asked for and daily received could he hope to maintain the Christian life.

He now began to realize what a difficult problem was before the youth. Society would be slow to give him credit for changed motives and character, and as proof would take only patient continuance in well-doing. The good doctor now more than suspected that in his own home Haldane would find much that was depressing and enervating. Worse than all, he would have to contend with an excitable and ungoverned nature, already sadly warped and biased wrongly. "What will be the final result?" sighed the old gentleman to himself. But he soon fell back hopefully on his belief that the Lord had begun a good work and would finish it.

Haldane listened attentively and gratefully to all that his old friend had to say, and felt sure that he could and would follow the advice given. Never before had right living seemed so attractive, and the path of duty so luminous. But the thought that chiefly filled him with joy was that henceforth he would not be compelled to plod forward as a weary pilgrim. He felt that he had wings; some of the divine strength had been given him. He believed himself changed, renewed, transformed; he was confident that his old self had perished and passed away, and that, as a new creature, ennobling tendencies would control him completely. He felt that prayer would henceforth be as natural as breathing, and praise and worship the strong and abiding instincts of his heart.

(To be continued.)

PAUL'S SERMON AT ANTIOCH.

Usually a Jewish preacher sat down during the delivery of his sermon, as is freely done by Roman Catholics abroad; but Paul, instead of going to the pulpit, seems merely to have risen in his place, and with uplifted arm and beckoning finger—in the attitude of one who, however much he may sometimes have been oppressed by nervous hesitancy, is proved by the addresses which have been preserved to us, to have been in moments of emotion and excitement a bold orator—he spoke to the expectant throng. The sermon in most instances, as in the case of our Lord's address at Nazareth, would naturally take the form of a *Midrash* on what the congregation had just heard in one or other of the two lessons. Such seems to have been the line taken by St. Paul in this his first recorded sermon. The occurrence of two words in this brief address, of which one is a most unusual form, and the other is employed in a most unusual meaning, and the fact that these two words are found respectively in the first of Deuteronomy and the first of Isaiah, combined with the circumstances that the historical part of St. Paul's sermon turns on the subject alluded to in the first of these chapters, and that the promise of free remission is directly suggested by the other, would make it extremely probable that those were the two chapters which he had just heard read. His sermon, in fact, or rather the heads of it, which can alone be given in the brief summary of Luke, is exactly the kind of masterly combination and application of these two Scripture lessons of the day which we should expect from such a preacher. And when turning to the Jewish Lectionary, and bearing in mind its extreme antiquity, we find that these two very lessons are combined as the *Parashah* and *Haftarah* of the same Sabbath, we see an almost convincing proof that those were the two lessons which had been read on that Sabbath day in the synagogue of Antioch more than 1800 years ago. Here again we find another minute and most unsuspected trace of the close faithfulness of Luke's narrative, as well as an incidental proof that Paul spoke in Greek. The latter point, however, hardly needs proof. Greek was at that time the language of the civilized world to an extent far greater than French is the common language of the Continent. It is quite certain that all the Jews would have understood it; it is very doubtful whether more than a few of them would have understood the Pisdian dialect; it is to the last degree improbable that Paul knew anything of Pisdian; and that he suddenly acquired it by the gift of tongues, can only be regarded as an exploded fancy due to an erroneous interpretation.

THE CONVERSION OF PAUL.

To the eyes of Paul's companions, God spake by the blinding light; to their ears by the awful sound; but to the soul of His chosen servant He was visible indeed in the excellent glory, and He spoke in the Hebrew tongue; but whether the vision and the voice came through the dull organs of sense or in presentations infinitely more intense, more vivid, more real, more unutterably convincing to the spirit by which only things spiritual are discerned—this is a question to which those only will attach importance to whom the soul is nothing but the material organism—who know of no irrefragable channels of intercourse between man and his Maker save those that come clogged with the imperfections of mortal sense—and who cannot imagine anything real except that which they can grasp with both hands. One fact remains upon any hypothesis—and that is, that the conversion of St. Paul was in the highest sense of the word a miracle, and one of which the spiritual consequences have affected every subsequent age of the history of mankind.

STEPHEN'S SPEECH.

Although it was delivered before the Sanhedrim, there can be little doubt that it was delivered in Greek, which, in the bilingual condition of Palestine—and, indeed, of the civilized world in general—at that time, would be perfectly understood by the members of the Sanhedrim, and which was perhaps the only language which Stephen could speak with fluency. The quotations from the Old Testament follow the Septuagint, even where it differs from the Hebrew, and

the individuality which characterizes almost every sentence of the speech forbids us to look on it as a mere conjectural paraphrase. There is no difficulty in accounting for its preservation. Apart from the fact that two secretaries were always present at the judicial proceedings of the Sanhedrim, there are words and utterances which, at certain times, are branded indelibly upon the memory of their hearers; and since we can trace the deep impression made by this speech on the mind of St. Paul, we find little difficulty in adopting the conjecture that its preservation is due to him. The *Haggadah* in which it abounds, the variations from historical accuracy, the free citation of passages from the Old Testament, the roughness of style, above all the concentrated force which makes it lend itself so readily to differing interpretations, are characteristics which leave on our minds no shadow of doubt that whoever may have been the reporter, we have here at least an outline of Stephen's speech. And this speech marked a crisis in the annals of Christianity. It led to consequences that changed the Church from a Judaic sect at Jerusalem, into the Church of the Gentiles and of the world. It marks the commencing severance of two institutions which had not yet discovered that they were mutually irreconcilable.

"NO ONE CAN BE CERTAIN OF THAT."

A few months ago, while travelling in a railway carriage in the south of Scotland, I began to distribute some gospel books amongst my fellow passengers.

A tall, stout man, sitting opposite me, while reading the one I had given him, shouted aloud:

"And he was quite right!"

I asked him what he meant. Holding the book in his hand he replied:

"The man spoken of here, when asked if his sins were forgiven, replied that no one could be certain of that, and I believe he was right."

I remarked that that was only his *opinion*, and he might be wrong.

"Oh, but," said he, "no man living knows that he is saved; and I don't care how good he is he cannot be certain of it on this side of the grave."

"Surely you don't believe God's Word."

"Oh, yes, I believe every verse of it from Genesis to Revelation."

Opening my Bible, I read:—"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John v. 13).

"You say, 'No one can know,' and God says, 'Ye may know,' whether should I believe you or God?"

Immediately he burst out, saying, "I don't care what you say, we can never be certain about it till we die; we must just do what we can, and hope for the best."

"Friend," I replied, "I am sorry that you don't believe what God has said."

"But I do believe the Bible."

"Does k-n-o-w read h-o-p-e in your version?"

To this he made no remark, excepting that no one could know, and that it was "great presumption" in any one going the "length of saying he was saved."

I replied that if what he said was correct, he would require to get a pair of scissors and cut out the following Scriptures:

"I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His Name's sake" (1 John ii. 12). The apostle John states that the sins of those to whom he was writing were forgiven. If the apostle knew this they surely knew it themselves.

"We know that we have passed from death unto life" (1 John iii. 14). John does not say, "I, who have attained to such holiness, know," but "We know." They knew it. They did not hope that this great change would take place. They knew it had taken place.

"We are always confident" (2 Cor. v. 6) Paul did not say, "It is great presumption in any one to be confident;" nor did he say, "I, who am so nearly perfect, am confident," but, "We are always confident."

My friend listened to the Scriptures and my remarks on them, but declared that he would still hold to his opinion that "No one could be certain."

Reader, have you hitherto imagined that no one could be sure of his sins being forgiven while here on earth? If so, lay aside your "thoughts" and "opinions" and believe God's Word.

Men say, "No one can be certain."

God's Word says, "Ye may know."

Men say, "It is great presumption to go that length."

God's Word says, "These things have I written that ye may know."

Men say, "We can only hope."

God's Word says, "We know."

Men say, "You can never be confident."

God's Word says, "We are always confident."

Reader, whether will you believe God or man? "Tell me how I can be sure of it," I hear one ask. You can only know it through believing what God has said in His Word. You cannot feel saved; you cannot feel your sins forgiven, but thank God you can know it, and know it now, as you read these lines. You and I deserve to die eternally on account of our sins, but Christ died for us. The punishment that we merited He took. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities;" and now Jehovah declares, "By Him all that believe are justified" (Acts xiii. 39). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John iii. 36). Don't wait for any "experience" or "feeling," but rest your soul on the bare Word of God, and you will know (not "feel,") that you are saved and your sins forgiven.—*British Evangelist*.

THE deputies to India from the United Presbyterian Church, Dr. Young and Mr. McLarn, are diligently prosecuting their inquiries at the various mission stations in Kajiapootana. They have received a most cordial welcome, not only from the missionaries and English residents, but from men of the highest social standing among the natives.

BRITISH AND FOREIGN ITEMS.

THE Church of San Giovanni, in Conca, Milan, dating back at least to A.D. 879, has been purchased by the Waldenses.

THE University of Berlin, Germany, has this year 3,608 matriculated students, and 1,693 who have the privilege of attending its lectures, making 5,301, the largest attendance it has ever had.

THE Rev. Mr. Cole, of Erzurum, lately visited a village in Eastern Turkey, where he found some ten men who had embraced Christianity, and were waiting for some one to come among them and organize a church.

FOURTY-EIGHT native Christians, prepared by the Rev. Ruttonji Nowroji, of the Church Missionary Society Mission at Aurangabad, in the Nizam's Territory, Central India, were confirmed by the Bishop of Madras on November 21st.

THE Latin text of the Papal encyclical letter against divorce fills twelve columns of the "Osservatore Romano." It says the attempt made under various guises by the modern spirit of irreligion to rob the Church of her right either to bind or loose the marriage tie, must be resisted by the whole Roman Catholic world.

POMARE, the Queen of Tahiti and Moorea, died last September, in the seventieth year of her age. When she was born missionaries had just come to the South Sea Islands, but not a single convert had been won to Christ. When Pomare died she had been many years a faithful Christian, more than 300 islands had become wholly Christianized, and on nearly all the rest Christian workers were making known the Gospel.

COL SYNGE, whom Sir Austin Layard sent last month to distribute relief among Mussulman refugees in Eastern Roumelia, has been captured, with his wife, by Greek brigands near Salonica. The landits demand a large ransom. Col. Syngé writes the British Consul at Salonica, urging him to prevent the despatch of troops, as the brigands threaten to kill him and his wife if an armed force is sent against them. Sir Austin Layard has ordered the British gunboat Rapid to Salonica to inquire the best course to pursue for their liberation.

THERE are signs that the childish fiction that the Pope is but a person in velvet fetters in the Vatican will soon be dispensed with. As a fact, Leo XIII. frequently drives *incognito* through the streets of Rome. On Christmas Eve, for example, his Holiness accompanied by Cardinals Di Pietro and Nina, slowly traversed the Corso, examining the windows set out with toys and presents for children, with a very natural interest. He then went to the Church of the Gesu and prayed a while before he returned to the silver dungeons at the other side of the bridge of St. Angelo.

PROF. NEVIL STORY MASKELYNE, of the mineral department of the British Museum, writes to the "Times" announcing the entire success of J. Ballantyne Hannay, of Glasgow, a Fellow of the Chemical Society of London, in producing diamonds. He says Hannay sent him some crystallized particles presenting exactly the appearance of fragments of broken diamonds, and these diamonds easily scored deep grooves in the polished surface of a sapphire. Hannay's process will soon be announced to the Royal Society. In his letter on the subject of the production of artificial diamonds, Prof. Story Maskelyne, after describing the various tests applied, concludes as follows:—"There is no doubt whatever that J. Ballantyne Hannay has succeeded in solving the problem, and removing from scientific chemistry the opprobrium so long adhering to it. For, whereas the larger part of the great volume recording the triumphs that chemistry has achieved is occupied by chemistry of carbon, this element has never been crystallized by man till Hannay achieved the triumph which I have the pleasure of recording to-day."

THE following notes are to hand on the trade of the Obi River system. Altogether there are now engaged in this trade thirty steamers, of which twenty-two are of iron, and eight of wood. One is of 150-horse power, six of 120, five of 100, and the rest of 80-horse power. The passenger traffic between Tzumen and Tomsk occupies only seven steamers of the Kurbatow and Ignatow Company. Besides the steamers are fifty-two freight ships (*barzha*) five of which are specially devoted to the transport of convicts. These vessels carry from 12,000 to 30,000 *pu*. There are also sixteen decked vessels (*guyanka*), and boats on the Tom for shallow places. The following figures represent the traffic on the Obi River system during the navigable season of 1878. Various manufactures, 1,014,866 *pu* (of which manufactured goods 500,000 *pu*; iron, steel, and steel goods, 260,000 *pu*); provisions and raw products, 1,417,272 *pu*; fish, 350,000 *pu*; besides on the Irutsh and Obi, for export wheat and other agricultural products, 54,000 *pu*; besides foreign goods brought in by sea, 14,600 *pu*—total, 2,850,090 *pu*.

THE useful work of the societies for the protection of children from cruel parents and guardians may be gathered from what is reported of the operations of the New York Society, in the words of Mr. Gerry:—"The child beggars had disappeared. The miserable little flower girls, who used to haunt the theatres for immoral purposes, had disappeared. The employment of children in juvenile opera troops—that abomination—had been suppressed. The infamous padrone system, by which children of tender years were bought of their parents, and brought in droves to this country to be beaten, starved, abused, and worked well nigh to death, to support their lazy and infamous masters, had been crushed. The practice of sending children—young boys and girls—to pot-houses after liquor for their lazy superiors was also being put a stop to, and before a twelve-month rolled around the curse of baby-farming in New York would be unknown. What the Society chiefly wanted now was, some permanent locality, some building to which they could send their newly-rescued charges, to be fed and cared for until the courts disposed of them."