

not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." (b) The conclusion: "For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever, Amen."

IV. THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE KINGDOM.—Lessons IX.-XI.—The underlying principle of Christian ethics is, not self-interest, but self-abnegation.

Lesson IX. Our Father's Care. Matt. vi. 24-34. Golden Text, 1 Peter v. 7.

1. The Christian's service for God. (a) Two masters. (c) A bad master. (d) A good Master.

2. God's care for the Christian. (a) Well-fed birds. (b) Well-dressed flowers. (c) To-morrow.

Lesson X. The Saviour's Golden Rule.—Matt. vii. 1-14. Golden Text, Matt. vii. 12

1. Censoriousness condemned. 2. Discrimination recommended. 3. Prayer invited. 4. The Golden Rule.

5. The two ways.

Lesson XI. The False and the True.—Matt. vii. 15-29. Golden Text, James i. 22.

1. Profession and conduct. (a) Sheep and wolves. (b) The tree and the fruit. (c) Saying and doing.

2. Foundations of character. (a) A wise builder. (b) A foolish builder. (c) The true Teacher.

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 *Haggadth* 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.

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 indubitable 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.

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 Lctionary, and bearing in mind its extreme antiquity, we find that these two very lessons are combined as the *Pisshah* and *Haphtarah* 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 Pishidian dialect; it is to the last degree improbable that Paul knew anything of Pishidian; and that he suddenly acquired it by the gift of tongues, can only be regarded as an exploded fancy due to an erroneous interpretation.

"NO ONE CAN BE CERTAIN OF THAT."

A few months ago, while traveling 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 JEWS OF EUROPE.

The present position of the Jewish race is altogether anomalous. The Jews are at once the most national and the most cosmopolitan race on the earth; but they neither found a State of their own, nor do they become absorbed in the population of the countries they live in. It seems difficult to believe that this contradiction can be a permanent one. The ceaseless oppression under which they long suffered forced them to be a caste apart. It was as futile for them to hope for a genuine national life of their own as it was to hope to share the national life of others. Their enfranchisement puts the alternative before them to do either the one or the other; and the one or the other they will, in the natural course of things, do. It is obvious that the race is in a state of transition; and all final or dogmatic judgments about it are as unreasonable as they are impertinent. But it needs no prophet to see that the sentiment of nationality which has attained in our days a force hitherto unknown in the world must inevitably turn the scale one way or the other. Either some sudden impulse, of which at present there are few signs, will lead the race to attempt the task, whether possible or impossible, of founding a Jewish State in the East, or else continued intercourse with the Christian world, the continued sharing of its public life, and continued intermarriages between the Jews and the Christians, will gradually lead to the absorption of the people by the other nations of the earth. No one but themselves will venture to say which would be the better alternative; but the latter certainly appears the more likely. But it is probable that they will long hover between the two paths, too full of individuality to be easily absorbed, and with too little political cohesion for any great national enterprise to be feasible. And for countries like Germany, where they are very numerous, or like Roumania, where they live among a much less energetic people, the results of this dubious position will not be without inconvenience, either to themselves or to those among whom they live. It is idle to complain of what is inevitable, and what is very largely the result of Christian misdeeds in the past.—*The Saturday Review*.

GIVING MONEY TO BEGGARS.

Persons who really know anything about the poor, never weary of entreating those whose hearts are better than their heads, not to give money to street beggars. They reiterate the statement that the beggars in the streets are not only poor, but that they are, as a rule, dissolute, worthless, utterly without moral stamina, and beyond the power of being helped so that they may use to more respectable ways of living. Good-natured, easy-going people will say, "Oh! but I could not bear to think but the story might be true, and that by refusing some pence I might be allowing a deserving person to starve." The professional beggar knows as well as possible the thoughts that are passing through the mind of the person who is importuned, and who is considering whether peace would not be easily purchased at the cost of a few pence. The whine increases, further circumstances of misery are enumerated, the blessings are poured forth profusely when the donation is received, the unwise giver goes on his or her way, having gratified the impulse of giving, and the beggar generally resorts to the nearest public house, where he may enjoy the results of his successful imposition.

It cannot be too often reiterated that people who give money to ordinary street beggars are doing harm. Not only do they encourage the vicious, but in wasting their money they lessen their own power of doing good. In the beginning of this week an old woman was brought up at one of the London police-courts for "obtaining money under false pretences." Carrying in her arms a bundle of rags rolled up underneath her shawl, she asked passers by, "Won't you give me a copper for the sake of dear baby?" and the soft-hearted passers by responded by gifts of coppers. A policeman, rendered suspicious by experience, demanded sight of the "dear baby," and found out the imposture. The lady and gentleman who had just made a donation to the old woman must have felt thoroughly ashamed of their easy weakness when the policeman called them to turn round and see the exposure of the fraud. Until people refuse to themselves the luxury of believing in the tales of beggars, or will cease to gratify their own indolence by giving without inquiry, such impostures will certainly happen.

It is true that now and then everyone receives a shock by hearing that some poor creature has succumbed to cold and want of food, but such sufferers are never of the class of the regular street beggars, and no money given to the latter can at all prevent the occurrence of those deaths from starvation which all lament. These can only be helped by those who work in regularly organized fashion. If the money lavished on street beggars were given to those persons whom long experience has taught the best modes of aiding the poor, much good may be done. We cannot all be our own almoners, and see personally that our money does good rather than harm; but we can all exercise judgment as to the choice of the agency through which our alms shall pass. The very worst that we could appoint is that which would give money to the importunities of the professional beggar.—*Queen*.

THE deputies to India from the United Presbyterian Church, Dr. Young and Mr. McLaren, are diligently prosecuting their inquiries at the various mission stations in Rajpootana. 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.