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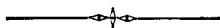
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heresy of Pelagianism, originally due to this island, we have no means of judging. But, as far as we know, Bradwardine's treatise was the first formal refutation composed in *England*, and it takes rank now with the folios of Cardinal Norris, Father Garnier, and numerous others in the lists of that controversy, which is probably destined never to be closed. From the time of its first stormy commencement in the fifth century, the Augustinian theology may be said to have held the ascendant in the Church. But it has never been without its vigorous assailants, and in some points it has been worsted and almost driven from the field. Bradwardine may fairly lay claim to be one of its learned defenders, according to the formal, and, to us, most perplexing fashion of the scholastic writings of his day.

As Bradwardine died before the opinions of John Wycliffe were developed, there is no means of judging his estimate of these views, which, while they inaugurated a new theology, that has borne such happy fruit, were yet not free from crude and indefensible theories. As a fellow-chaplain with Fitzralph, the great opponent of the Friars, we may hazard a guess that the Profound Doctor was not over-fond of these meddling and arrogant intruders, who were especially troublesome in his University of Oxford. As Chancellor of the University, he must have had abundant experience of the troubles and disputes stirred up by them, though he could reverence the learning of the greater men among them, one of the foremost of whom was a distinguished member of his own College of Merton.¹ Mr. Hallam assigns Bradwardine a high place among the geometricians of his day,² and if he did not succeed in squaring the circle, he may yet have been fairly and highly distinguished in this branch of learning.

GEORGE G. PERRY.



ART. VI.—ST. PAUL'S "INFIRMITY."

IN the twenty-third chapter of the book of the Acts of the Apostles we read words concerning the great Apostle of the Gentiles not in keeping with the usual conduct of that remarkably courteous man, and especially not in harmony with his respect and reverence, so often manifested, for the higher and ruling powers. Moreover, in the same chapter we read words in which St. Paul stands before us, either as

¹ William de Ockham, who was probably contemporary with Bradwardine at Merton, as he died in 1347.

² "Literature of Middle Ages," i. 112.

ignorant of the person of the high-priest, which seems improbable, or using words which were not truthful, in saying, "I wist not that he was the high-priest." That he would not fail in courtesy when standing before the rulers, after having pleaded his Roman citizenship, we may be quite sure, even if we do not add the further influence, viz., the guidance of the Holy Spirit in such an hour of trial.

How, then, are we to understand this outbreak? We cannot esteem it a mere hasty loss of temper which caused him to address the man he called "a whited wall" in such terms, when he had commanded those that stood by to smite the Apostle on the mouth, because he had said, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." If we say that righteous anger, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, caused him to rebuke in so forcible a manner an act of gross injustice, we still have to explain the Apostle's conduct, and in a manner to justify it.

Is there not a sufficient and ample explanation which at the same time explains other words of the Apostle, and elucidates almost to demonstration the nature of the suffering to which he so frequently alluded as his infirmity, or more decidedly, in one well-known writing, as "a thorn," or rather, "the thorn in the flesh"?¹

In the opening words of this chapter, in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, we read, "And Paul earnestly beholding the council." Now, why should this be recorded if it merely means he looked upon those he was about to address? We may take it for granted that he would do so. But the Greek

¹ In the many interpretations that have been given we can observe a constant tendency in the writers to interpret the matter from personal experience; for the same reason, readers incline to a view which touches upon a suffering they have felt. This tendency should be guarded against as misleading. As in other Scriptures that afford difficult passages, the rule that, first of all, the guide is to compare Scripture with Scripture, cannot be too closely obeyed. There is a danger to be avoided of another kind, viz., identifying St. Paul's "thorn in the flesh" with the sufferings of some well-known historical character, because the description of the sufferings appear somewhat similar. This leads to, first, an interpretation of the suffering of the said historical character; and from this, an interpretation of the nature of St. Paul's malady. Of the ordinary interpretations, perhaps the most common one is that the thorn was an impediment in the speech; but that would not make the Apostle a visible object of pity or of scorn. Moreover, this would be a permanent infliction, and plainly this thorn in the flesh was not always equally manifest, or equally painful; besides, there is no pain attending speech impeded or hesitation. Spiritual trials are likewise removed as not being the thorn, by the words of the Apostle concerning the outward nature of his trial. The suffering was chiefly felt when he was before the eyes of men, and he chiefly laments it because it hindered his work.

word tells us that it was not an ordinary gaze, but a fixed look; and does it not mean that he looked with the intense gaze of a man whose sight was imperfect, who suffered from irritation in the eyelids or pain in the eyeballs, which necessitated this fixed look, to see at all accurately or to discern persons before him, one from the other, with any certainty? If this were so, we have an easy and natural explanation of the Apostle's words, "I wist not that he was the high-priest," that is, I discerned him not.

Moreover, the Apostle does not seem at first to have recognised the component parts of the assembly. A man of perfect sight, well acquainted with Jerusalem, and the dress and manners of each sect, would see this at a glance, especially a man of such discernment and quick intellectual gifts.

This slowness of perception must have therefore arisen from other causes not intellectual; after a time, from exclamations on one side or the other, he would gather the fact from his ears which his eyes failed to tell him, that "the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees;" and thus we have three incidents,¹ all pointing to one and the same idea, that the Apostle was suffering from defective eyesight.

When we turn to those passages of his writings which speak of his infirmity, we gather that the suffering, whatever it may have been, was more intense at times, that it was a serious hindrance to him in his work, that it diminished his power in speaking, that it was exceedingly painful, and that it was literally a thorn or stake in the flesh.

We may find an explanation of the figure in Ezekiel (xxviii. 24): "And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them, that despised them; and they shall know that I am the Lord God." Perhaps the Apostle, in the nature of the suffering, felt as a man walking through an underwood of prickly thorns, which assail and injure the most tender part of the face, the eyes.

Under nervous excitement, and when addressing many persons, the pain in his eyes may have become intensified, so that when he most required his eyes they were the least under his control. A speaker of power, by his eye, drives home to his hearers his arguments, quite as much as he convinces by his eloquence; and before that affliction came, no doubt the bright and intellectual eye of this gifted man had convinced many a Jew that he ought to go with Saul of Tarsus against Jesus of Nazareth. And afterwards, when he had

¹ His earnest gaze; his words, "I wist not;" his discovery of the sects present.

become the Apostle of the Gentiles, no doubt he stirred the hearts of many by his speaking eye, the very window of the light of his deep soul.

After the messenger of Satan arrived, and was suffered to fasten on him this peculiar and serious affliction, he would again and again feel how great was his loss, if, with weak and imperfect sight, and suffering pain at the same time, he could not confirm his words by showing the conviction of his soul, and enforce his arguments in the expression of his eyes. He would desire, too, to read the souls of those he addressed; and this, if the other inference be correct, he could no longer do. We learn, besides, concerning this affliction, that it was a very visible infirmity, and hence was both external and internal.

These thoughts, or some of them, which have been often urged, find decided confirmation when we examine the Apostle's own words concerning the infliction, in Gal. iv. 13 and 2 Cor. xii. In the first passage the Apostle says, "Ye know how through the infirmity of the flesh I preached the Gospel unto you at the first, and my temptation which was in the flesh ye despised not, nor rejected, but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where is, then, the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes,¹ and have given them to me." We gather from this that the writer, at the time to which he refers, had had a peculiarly severe visitation of his suffering, and that the infirmity was manifest to all.

No interpretation of the nature of the infliction can come nearer than the two suggestions, that it was either a deficiency in the power of speech, or an infirmity in some portion of the face. If the affliction had been in speaking, we should have heard more confirmation of this idea. We meet just the contrary: his words are always forcible. St. Paul was not strictly an eloquent man, but evidently a most incisive speaker; he was like a workman who strikes a nail truly; this we perceive in the speech before the Sanhedrim, of Acts xxiii., and also when the Apostle was before Felix and Festus; there is, indeed, no evidence of any such infirmity as an impediment in speech.

It has been surmised that a kind of drawing of the countenance was the evil, but of this we have no hints; and no allusion is made either by the sufferer or bystanders which would naturally lead to such an explanation. And, besides, it must have been something still more painful and embarrassing which would be described as a thorn in the flesh; and

¹ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἑμῶν. A.V.: "Your own eyes." R.V.: "Your eyes."

surely it is going away from the natural conclusion, which Gal. iv. 13 affords, to say that the expression, "Ye would have plucked out your own eyes," has no reference to the infirmity. Why should such a sacrifice be suggested, if only a figure of speech?—why not "given your own lives"; much more so, than "your own eyes"? But if the Apostle wanted good eyes, free from pain, and full of life and fire, the words have a true and natural meaning. When we examine the other passage in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, we meet a still stronger confirmation.

The thorn in the flesh is given lest he should be exalted above measure by the abundance of revelations and visions. How natural it is that the eyes should be afflicted in him who had seen the glory of God in visions, lest he should be exalted above measure by the honour of such exaltation! The idea may receive further support if we call to mind that it was said of the Apostle at one time, "His bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."

The eye is the greatest power of all in the personal presence of a man; and that being weak through infirmity, the bodily presence becomes weak in the eyes of those who judge as man sees.

In the earlier days, for instance, when Stephen the martyr made his defence, we can imagine Saul of Tarsus, the young man at whose feet the witnesses laid their upper garments, a man of fiery glance; we see in our imagination a man of olive countenance, oval face, marking the best and most noble type of a son of Israel; not a man of lofty stature, but quick in all his movements, impetuous and fervent, carrying others with him by his enthusiasm, setting them on fire by his zeal, even by his natural gifts as a leader, a king of men.

In those days no small part of his influence would come through those dark, deep, piercing eyes, that read at a glance the souls of other men, and made them feel the power and the might of the intellect of the man of Cilicia.

He once gloried in his own might, in his own natural power, in his glance, in his command of men, as all such men do, until they know better. In those days he thought he ought to do all in his power against the new way—was confident in himself.

Now, in the latter days, he is a man prematurely old by sufferings and labours, by marvellous hardships, by the deepest anxieties—all tending to wear out a nature intensely sympathetic; and, in addition, suffering from a peculiar infirmity, through evil report and good report, while ever-increasing difficulties surround him.

All these ideas, gathered from the various places in which

the infirmity of St. Paul is mentioned, point to one and the same conclusion, that the infirmity was a partial loss of eyesight, attended with stabbing pain, rendering him an object of pity to those who had pity in their hearts, and of reproach to those who had none.

St. Paul concludes the Epistle to the Galatians by calling their attention to the large characters of his own writing. His almost constant employment of an amanuensis is of itself a suggestion, if not a proof, that some infirmity hindered him in writing freely; the infirmity was not in his hands. Surely from this passage, without others, we might conclude that he had an infirmity in the eyes, even if it cannot be positively proved that this was the "thorn in the flesh."

F. H. MORGAN.



ART. VII.—THE HONITON LACE INDUSTRY.

A CRY for help reaches us from the south-east corner of Devonshire, where for the last three centuries the female population of the districts round Honiton has supported itself by the making of lace. Less than half a century ago these workers, scattered throughout the small towns and villages, numbered some eight thousand, earning an ample wage and skilled in their work. But times have changed; the trade has, of late, been steadily on the decline. The workers have dwindled to some fifteen hundred; the women in general are less capable of achieving first-rate work, and what they do succeed in producing is, from the force of circumstances, very poorly remunerated.

The distress is great; the hopes of the workers have sunk to the lowest ebb. They press in on all sides upon the small grocers, who are the ordinary lace-traders in the villages, offering lace in exchange for the necessaries of life, thankful if by these means they can earn a bare subsistence. But in too many cases not only can these small grocers not afford to pay the workers in cash, but even the "truck" or barter system, as it is called, is unworkable. The grocer has no market for the lace thus thrust upon him, he cannot afford either to buy or exchange, and the workers are left to starve. There are whole villages dependent on the industry, and lace centres where lace-making is the staple industry of the scattered hamlets, whose inhabitants are thus entirely devoid of the means of earning the scantiest livelihood. Even where the distress is less acute there is still great hardship. The work may be sold, but the worker receives a low price. And, in