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equal in extent to the good ground, and it would, moreover, reflect very adversely upon the preparatory work of the tiller of the soil. And likewise with men, those represented as good ground may be much more extensive than the hardened, or the superficial, or the unprepared. The most that can be said is that good seed does not always have a good chance, but it scarcely warrants the conclusion that our Lord meant to suggest the failure of three-fourths of the seed sown.

J. E. COMPTON.

Colchester.

Mark ii. 4; Luke v. 19.

I HAVE just seen the suggested interpretation of these verses by Mr. Morris. If he will look up *Bible Manners and Customs* by the late Dr. G. M. Mackie (A. & C. Black), he will find it stated that the awning 'must have been the part of the roof removed.' Dr. Mackie spent many years in the East, and his little book is of immeasurably greater value than its size and price indicate.

R. W. WALLACE.

St. Andrews.

Entre Nous.

The Speaker's Bible.

Three volumes of 'The Speaker's Bible' have now appeared, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (9s. 6d. net), *The Gospel according to Luke*, vols. i. and ii. (12s. 6d. each). Volume iv., which deals with the books of *Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth*, will be published at the end of this month.

We give below three reviews of volume iii. They have not been picked out specially, for they are the last three reviews which have appeared, or at least the last three which have come to our notice.

The Churchman for April 1924, after speaking of Dr. Hastings as 'Prince of Editors,' goes on: 'Dr. Hastings has gathered the cream of expository preaching on seven of the most important chapters of the Gospel (8¹⁸ to 15¹²) into a twelve and sixpenny book that is worth more than double its price. No man who desires to learn the best that has been said on a text can do without this book. Published at the Speaker's Bible Office, Aberdeen, it will be a very welcome gift to the clergy, and what is more important, it will, if used with discretion, prove beneficial to the congregations of the men who study its pages. Dr. Hastings had a genius for selecting the best, and the present volume is one of the very best compilations that we owe to him.'

The British Messenger for March 1924 writes: 'We had the privilege and pleasure of calling attention to the first volume of *The Gospel according to Luke* in "The Speaker's Bible," a series of volumes which had been planned by Dr. Hastings, and materials for which had to some extent been gathered

together by that eminent and indefatigable scholar, when death placed an arrest upon his theological enterprises. The present volume, we are informed, completes the material left by the editor, so far as the Gospel of Luke is concerned. We commended the first volume in the highest terms we had at our disposal, and we believe that it is surpassed in value by the second. Here we witness the selective faculty of Dr. Hastings' functioning at its highest degree of efficiency. It does not matter where one opens the volume; everywhere there is a wealth of literary and historical allusion; almost in every paragraph there is something displaying the loftiest moral and spiritual insight. The treasures of hundreds of minds—poets, scientists, theologians, essayists—their thoughts on life's deepest problems, on God, and righteousness, sin, sacrifice, immortality, above all, on Jesus Christ, His teaching, His death and resurrection enrich these pages. Manifest all through is the editor's profound reverence for the New Testament, as containing the Revelation of the Father, and dominating all is the tremendous personality of the Lord. Dr. Hastings has brought together in these volumes the quintessence of human thought and utterance regarding man's moral and spiritual life; yet one feels that the thought and the words of the Master transcend at an infinite remove the thoughts and words of even the most gifted and the holiest of mankind. When we closed the volume, we were left with a renewed and overmastering sense of the greatness, of the uniqueness, of the glory of Jesus. We are conscious more than ever that, judging even by His

words, the only adequate formula by which to express human thought regarding Jesus is that sentence in the Te Deum: "Thou art the Everlasting Son of the Father." We commend this volume of "The Speaker's Bible" with all our heart to ministers and students; also to evangelists and home missionaries, who will find everything to their hand to fit them for facing audiences, both outdoor and indoor.'

In *The Congregational Quarterly* for April 1924, Dr. A. J. Grieve says: 'The first volume was noticed in the issue for October 1923. This one covers the Gospel from 8¹⁸ to 15¹², and completes the material left by Dr. Hastings on Luke's Gospel. Dr. Hastings had a diviner's rod for sound and helpful exposition, and many waters have gushed forth to fill the reservoir of 444 double-columned closely-printed pages. We notice a good many references to Papini's *Story of Christ* in the first half of the book, but poets, preachers, essayists, biographers are all pressed into the service. Revs. J. Robertson Cameron and A. J. Gossip contribute signed articles, the latter dealing with "Eternal Life." Among the more extended papers are studies on Hatred, Hypocrisy, Waste, Self-love and the Loneliness of Christ. The Bibliographical Index should be very useful; it runs to thirty-six pages.'

POINT AND ILLUSTRATION.

Penitence.

We welcome a small volume of mystical thought and practical guidance by the late Mrs. E. Herman, with the title *The Finding of the Cross* (James Clarke; 3s. net). It contains some six studies which appeared originally in 'The Church Times.' They deal with the way along which we are to travel, so that we may discover the Cross afresh and its implications for daily life. On Penitence Mrs. Herman writes: 'We show our Lord our poor efforts, our laborious penances. We are impelled to offer Him our sorrows and disappointments: and that is well. Only our sins we hug to our bosoms, turning them towards ourselves and writhing with shame, instead of turning them towards Him and being humbled by His joy at our confidence. We are told of St. Jerome that one Christmas night he wished to give a present to the Infant Jesus. First he offered the Lord his works on the Holy Scriptures, then his labours for the conversion of souls, then such virtues of his as he

was able to offer. But all this was not what the Lord wanted. "Jerome," He said, "it is thy sins I wished for. Give them to Me that I may pardon them."'

The Difficulties of Life.

A new volume of sermons has just been published by Dr. W. L. Watkinson, *The Fairness of Trial* (Sharp; 5s. net). There is a portrait of the author on the cover, and if there are those who do not know Dr. Watkinson's work the portrait will incline them to begin the reading of this book, for the portrait is that of a man who has been at stern issue with the realities of experience and who has possessed his soul. We have in these sermons the result of Dr. Watkinson's ripe experience in the Christian life, and all the time the happiest light is thrown upon religious experience by references to other spheres of thought.

Here are some of his thoughts on the phrase from the sixty-first Psalm: 'To a rock, for me too high thou wilt lead me.' The 'rock too high,' he finds, 'is sometimes a spiritual problem that defies our understanding.' By this he means a personal difficulty and one which is overwhelming, which 'calls into question some precious article of our faith, without which life would become irrational.' Here he would have us remember the unreasonableness of expecting to comprehend forthwith all the ways of God. 'It seems to me that in this matter the way in which our scientists accept a painful problem is very often an example to the saints. For instance, the serious naturalist is painfully exercised by the presence of so much cruelty in Nature, yet by an intellectual humility he reconciles himself to the dark fact that he cannot understand. Miall writes: "I can never read Fabre's *Souvenirs Entomologiques* without a shudder. What may be the solution of the mystery, and how so much benevolent foresight can be reconciled with so much cruelty, it is not for the naturalist to explain, though the mere naturalist finds it hard to shake off these thoughts when they have once come up in his mind. . . . But let us be careful not to speak as if our little plummets had sounded the depths of the universe."'

And sometimes the 'rock too high' is the grief that rends the heart. 'Here, too, we must persist to believe in the wise method of the wonder-working God. Our brain aches striving to read the dark riddle, our strength is overtaxed by it, our heart

overwhelmed ; yet in the magnitude and extremity of the ordeal lies its efficacy.' Later he reminds us that the heritage of pain has become 'the path of progress, of perfection, of peace.' 'Cleopatra dreaming and scheming in that gilded barge on the placid stream, with silken tackle, purple sails, and oars of silver, makes a fine picture for the theatre ; but it had little more meaning, than that of a painted butterfly fluttering in the summer's sunshine. A very different spectacle is that of the Pilgrim Fathers in their mean brig, tossed on the wild Atlantic. No poop of beaten gold this time, no perfumed zephyr, no tune of flutes, but all was bare and harsh and tragic. Yet how vast the meaning ! It was a rough cradle, rudely rocked, with hurricanes for lullabies, but it proclaimed the infancy of a new race and the dawn of a new and brighter age. It is thus in the storm and the sea that the Almighty furthers His transcendent purpose.'

What, then, is the secret of the conquest of the 'rock too high' ? It is found in the words 'the things impossible with men are possible with God.' And then Dr. Watkinson goes on : 'Our modern science is a wonderful commentary on these words of our Lord. It has taught us to work astounding miracles by using a power above our own. Raising my own voice, I can hardly be heard across the street, but whispering my message through one of God's megaphones, I am heard beyond the Atlantic. Running on my own errand, I am out of breath directly ; but stepping into one of God's fiery cars, I cross continents with the speed of the wind. Assuming my own burden, I am oppressed by a trifle ; but pressing into my service an atom of God's power in a bit of dynamite, I remove mountains.'

The Weak Spot.

Mrs. Sterling Berry has collected a sufficient number of helpful passages from the writings of the late Dr. A. H. McNeile to form a small volume of *Daily Thoughts* (Heffer ; 2s. net). This is one selection : 'We all have a spot somewhere at which our will is weak. How are we going to strengthen it ? As knowledge of self is gained by getting a knowledge of Christ, so strength of will at our weak point is gained by realizing His will. . . . Not—how can I possibly overcome this and that weakness ? Think less about your weakness and far more and far oftener about Him.'

The Perfecting of Life.

The appearance of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald in Downing Street as Prime Minister has led to the publication of a reprint of his monograph on his wife, *Margaret Ethel MacDonald* (Allen & Unwin ; 2s. 6d. net), first published in 1912, a year after her death in her fortieth year. It is a fine tribute to a woman of a striking character built on the rock of a strong and sincere religious faith, and of a quite notable public service. She wore herself out, in fact, in her zeal to serve. She wrote in her diary in 1890 : 'The words which Teenie pointed out to me in Mrs. Browning's "A Vision of Poets," "Knowledge by suffering entereth, and Life is perfected by Death," have struck me very deeply.' 'In the autumn of 1910 she wrote to Mrs. Middleton [Co-Secretary with her of the Women's Labour League], who was then in the companionship of death : "I have always been meaning to ask whether you knew that poem. It has been a great help to me since I was a little girl, and it fixed itself upon Teenie Mackenzie (then my most intimate friend) and myself. I suppose girls like sad things sometimes, and in this there is such a note of triumph running all through the sadness and suffering." When Mary Middleton died, Mrs. MacDonald said of her : "She had no fear of death, and we need have none for her." ' After quoting this, Mr. MacDonald adds : 'I can but apply the words to herself.'

Conversion.

An autobiography of an unusual type has just reached us. It is that of the Rev. James Lindsay, D.D., who was for some years Associate Editor of 'Bibliotheca Sacra,' and who is well known through his philosophical writings. In the autobiography the ordinary happenings of life are neglected. Of his college years he says, 'punctuated with various sorrows and certain untoward events or fortunes,' but we are not told what these were. The volume is a record of Dr. Lindsay's intellectual development. He tells us in the introduction that he originally included an account of his spiritual development, but that he finally decided to omit the latter. The autobiography was left ready, and has now been published by his widow. The title is simply *Autobiography of Rev. James Lindsay, D.D.* (Blackwood ; 7s. 6d. net).

But Dr. Lindsay cannot always dissociate his

intellectual and spiritual development, and so we have the account of his conversion: 'Shortly before I went to College, there occurred in my youthful experience that which was destined to exercise a decisive influence over my life. It was of the nature of a religious crisis. In the indetermination of my life, I had for a few years alternated between seasons of religious reflection or concern, and times of sheer worldly aim and absorption. I mean, absorption in purely secular ambitions. At times my shrinking spirit was moved to the bases of the soul, my exterior the while one of unconcern. These alternations made my inner life deeply unsatisfying, so much so that, after profound mental exercise and spiritual reflection, I resolved to give up so divided a life, and, with that resolution, passed into the sunlight of spiritual certitude. I refrain from further detail of the experience, and am content to say I was in a new world—wherein I remained. It was no case of Goethe's "Gefühl ist alles"—a mere feeling-experience: I could to-day trace in detail the mental processes and exact sequences of spiritual thought involved in that crisis, to which the deepest anguish and heart-searching had led up. My oft-shrinking will had found that, as Saint Augustine had so long before described, its divided allegiance *must* end, and the new experience begin of willing only for God (velle fortiter et integre: Conf. viii. 8).' But the account is given in order to throw light on his intellectual development. So this is how he goes on: 'Suffice it now to say that, chief among essential features of the last phase of my experience at that time was the great fact of spiritual recognition—the soul had found its Father. That discovery eclipsed, for some considerable time, in joyous interest all else. The world was to me God's world in a way it had not been before: my love for Nature as His handiwork became intensely deepened. On the other hand, I clearly think my intellectual interests, for some considerable time after, suffered some narrowing and reactionary result, before the tidal current of spiritual sentiment. And no wonder if 'twere so; for, though thought was present and active in the whole experience from first to last, yet its mastery and comprehension could not be full at that early stage of my intellectual development; and not without truth are the words of Thomas Hill Green, in a very different connection, that "any spiritual impulse, not accompanied by clear and comprehensive thought, is enslaved by its own realisation." But intellect, in such a case, in due time reasserts itself, and the final fruits are golden.'

The acuteness and obvious sincerity of Dr. Lindsay's analysis of his intellectual development makes this short autobiography extremely valuable. The lengthy chapter on his work as philosopher will repay careful study. Its conclusion is: 'God, then,

is for me the Absolute.' This 'means that He satisfies the demands of the intellect for a true, consistent, thoroughgoing Absolute, with the immeasurable advantage, to boot, over every other Absolute that it can be worshipped.'

Service.

In *The Letters of C. H. Spurgeon* just published, some of the best are written to his twin-sons Charles and Thomas. Writing to the former as he was just beginning his life's work he says: 'I am glad you desire to do something for the Lord, and shall be still more so when you actually set about it. Time flies, and the opportunity for doing good flies with it. However diligent you may be in the future you can only do the work of 1875 in 1875, and if you leave it undone now it will be undone to all eternity.

'The diligent attention which you give to business, the careful purity of your daily life, and your concern to do common things in a right spirit—are all a real service of the Lord. The hours in which your earthly calling is followed industriously for Christ's sake are really hours of work for Jesus; but still this cannot satisfy you, or at least I hope it cannot. As redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus, you feel that you belong to Him and you long to shew your love to Him by actions *directly* meant to extend His kingdom and gather in souls which He loves to bless.

'When once such efforts are commenced they become easier and a kind of hunger to do more seizes upon the heart. It is not toil, but pleasure; and if God blesses what we do it rises from being a common pleasure to become a sacred delight.

'Whatsoever your hand findeth to do, do it with your might. It is not for me to suggest what, for the act of invention must be left to yourself, and half the pleasure lies in it.

'I deeply rejoiced to see that you had written that you rejoiced in prayer—may it always be so, and yet more and more. Nothing gives us such strength, or affords us such guidance. The Lord bless you *there* and all must be well.

'I have always hoped to see you a leader in the host of God. How it will be I know not, but that so it may be is one of my unceasing prayers.

'Dear son, may all blessings abound towards you. You know I love you very dearly.'¹

¹ P. 79 f.