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treats וַיִּשְׂאָהֶם as a perfect with ו consecutive. The announcement of punishment begins at this point, 'And you will lift up your images . . . and I will cause you to go into exile.' A graphic picture of exiles, laden with their impotent images and driven into banishment, is presented to us. The difficulty here is that Amos appears to have suddenly changed his ground. He has just challenged false ritual, but in v.²⁶ we discover that idolatry is the cause of God's wrath and punishment.

3. I think the difficulty might be got over, partially at least, by taking וַיִּשְׂאָהֶם as in the R.V., but reading it as a question and not as a statement. V.²⁶ carries on the thought of v.²⁵. Amos still contrasts Israel's sinful present with its happy past. The objection may be raised that we should expect ה to be followed by מָה in such interrogative sentences. But the Hebrew usage is not always the same (*vide* Ges. Kautzsch, § 150 h), and the inflection of the speaker's voice would determine whether a question were asked or not.

Linking up vv.²⁵⁻²⁶ in this way, we get a double challenge from Amos—a challenge of a hollow ceremonialism divorced from ethics, and a challenge on the ground of idolatrous practices. The prophet demands indignantly, 'Was it sacrifices and cereal-offerings ye brought me in the desert forty years, O House of Israel; and did ye bear Sakkuth, your king, and Kaiwan, your star-god . . .? So will I carry you away into exile,' etc.

Amos charges Northern Israel with having fallen away from the pure worship of the desert. Then no sacrifices were necessary, and, further, what they bore was the ark of their Covenant-God. It has been urged that otherwise star-worship is not heard of in the times of Amos. There is no doubt, however, that the corruptions of idolatry were at work, and there is no particular reason to deny the forms of astral cult mentioned here. The influence of Babylonia was far-reaching (see *Local Colour of the Bible*, vol. ii. p. 77 f.).

H. A. WILLIAMSON.

Lochee.

Entre Nous.

The Succour of the Sacrament.

There is a curious dearth of good sermons for special occasions. Recognizing this, Messrs. James Clarke set themselves to supply the need, publishing last year a volume of 'Harvest Thanksgiving Sermons' by representative preachers, and now this month issuing a companion volume of *Communion Addresses* (5s. net). The sermons in the present volume are by the Rev. Arch. Alexander, B.D., the Rev. James Black, D.D., the Rev. J. Golder Burns, B.D., the Rev. J. T. Forbes, D.D., the Rev. R. C. Gillie, D.C.L., Principal H. Maldwyn Hughes, D.D., the Rev. Norman Maclean, D.D., the Rev. G. H. Morrison, D.D., the Rev. James Reid, M.A., Prof. J. A. Robertson, D.D., the Rev. Hubert L. Simpson, M.A., and the Rev. Lauchlan MacLean Watt, D.D.

Dr. Gillie weaves his thoughts round the phrase in 1 Co 10¹⁶, 'the cup of blessing'—the cup of God's benevolence.

'His whole personality, perfected in obedience, complete in sacrifice, is available for each of us.

We are not mere beholders, we are partakers. "Eat," "Drink thereof," are the words in our ears. . . . Therefore when the bread and the wine enter into our bodies this is the plain and unmistakable assurance that He, His personality, His life, are available for us.' The Sacrament tells us clearly Christ's present availableness.

And the Sacrament is also perfectly adapted to the need of our human nature. 'Two things we suffer from in all our inward life, monotony and vagueness. . . . This sacrament deals effectually with these two disabilities. It removes monotony by giving focal points of spiritual experiences, mountain peaks on the journey, a little troublesome to climb but vastly rewarding.

'The further proof of adaptation to human need is this. Most of us are greatly helped by outward acts to make inward facts more real. We need the lifebelt if we are to swim easily in the rough water. Symbols are the lifebelt. The marriage ring does not make marriage more of a fact. . . . But the

marriage ring helps every wife to know the reality of the married life and the holiness of her vow. . . . The Sacrament of Communion is the marriage ring of the union of the soul with God in Christ.'

A Preposterous Assertion.

Jésus dans l'Histoire et dans le Mystère, by M. L. de Grandmaison (Bloud & Gay, Paris ; 3.50 fr.), is a reply of some seventy pages to a series of articles in the 'Mercure de France' by Dr. Couchoud, which the good father appears to think ought to be answered. It seems rather a waste of time. For Dr. Couchoud, if he is here accurately photographed, appears to be a rough bludgeoning kind of a person with no delicacy of touch, and small power of convincing. Briefly, his argument, we are told, is that there never was an historical Jesus, that all we have is a kind of Mystery Religion myth. There was a hope floating about in the air of a great Someone who was coming ; and Paul, in his mystical poetic way, saw the dream that he too shared actually embodied for a moment that hot day on the dusty road to Damascus. And that was how it all began ! Mark heard of it, it seems, and (surely rather cleverly !) concocted a Figure, all spun out of prophecy and imagination and hope and day-dreaming and apocalypse, with not a shadow of historical foundation ; and then the others followed him. Somebody thought out the Prodigal. Who ? Oh ! just any one. They were all doing that kind of thing quite easily, it seems. And some one else made up the Sermon on the Mount, and it got added too. So the thing grew. There was an infuriated colonel who bade a young officer remember that courage is a virtue, but foolish recklessness a crime. It seems a pity Dr. Couchoud was not there to hear. What can you make of a man who declares boldly that there is no allusion in Paul to an historical personage called Jesus ; no, nor, apart from the Gospels, in the whole New Testament, with one exception ? One likes that carefulness. It gives a fine air of verisimilitude to a preposterous assertion. Père de Grandmaison is very patient and courteous. But is it worth while ?

Reading the Newspaper.

'Have you ever considered what a call to prayer is the morning or evening newspaper ? It seems to me that every column, almost every paragraph, cries to us to side with and work with the will of God in some particular matter. In home politics, in

foreign politics, in Church and State, problems are being faced day by day which need an immense force of prayer behind them if they are to be wisely dealt with. Every morning in our newspaper we read of the sufferings or the sins or the perplexities or the happiness of many persons. Do you remember when some years ago a wretched man named Armstrong was being tried for the murder of his wife ? Day after day, week after week, we followed the sordid story in our newspaper. How many of us, I wonder, ever thought of praying to God to grant to that wretched man repentance and confession of sin ?'

This quotation is from *The Life of Prayer in the World*, by the Rev. Francis Underhill, M.A., a second impression of which has just been issued by Messrs. Mowbray (1s. 6d.), and it suggests a very different attitude from the one prevalent to-day, where the sordid is read eagerly because it is sordid, and papers are induced to print more and more of it to please their readers, so that at length it becomes necessary to introduce a Bill to prevent the printing of salacious matter.

Very simply and very directly Mr. Underhill deals with the life of prayer, dividing his subject into six chapters. They are the Interior Life, Distraction and Concentration in Prayer, Intercession, Meditation, Examination of Conscience, and Rules for the Life of Prayer in the World.

Distraction in Prayer.

'How is it possible for a person whose habits of thought are careless, selfish, unkind, impure, angry, self-centred, to be able at a set time to concentrate and restrain his thoughts in such a way as to be able to dwell upon God, to listen and speak to Him ?

'How can a person who never thinks of God, or hardly thinks of Him, all day and all night long, expect to kneel down at 7 o'clock in the morning and 11 o'clock at night, and say good, concentrated prayers ? No, if prayer is to be anything, it must be everything—not an occasional act, but the background and the atmosphere of life.'¹

¹ F. Underhill, *The Life of Prayer in the World*, 18.