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POETRY.

The Mount called Olivet.

A hallowed spot this mount of old,
When, after breaking bread,
"They sang an hymn," and going forth,
To "Olivet" were led;
A weary band and full of grief,
The parting hour so near;
But Christ the Comforter, e'en then,
Spoke words of hope and cheer.

Gethsemane was just below,
Near Kedron's gentle brook,
Where those disciples in great fear,
Their Master all forsook;
Yet resting on the mount awhile,
And passing o'er the pain,
He gives them promise of a time,
When He shall come again.

Another scene has Olivet,
When Christ, the ascending King,
Stands on its summit, leaving earth,
On glad triumphant wing;
And His own followers looking up,
Where the bright clouds were riven,
Behold their Master, entering thus,
As He shall come from Heaven.

And so the name of Olivet,
Christ's people now may take,
Memorial of His earthly life,
Precious, for Jesus sake;
Take it, and rear a house of God,
Where, listening as of old,
The same sweet story of the cross,
To numbers shall be told.

Our risen Head! we look to Thee,
Come in the Spirit's power,
Hallow our sanctuary now,
Be this th' accepted hour:
We wait, we look, as did th' eleven,
With eager, prayerful gaze,
Beyond the cloud where Thou art gone,
Come in these latter days.

Come, and our Olivet will be
A glorious beacon-light,
To shipwrecked ones who wearily,
Earth's stormy waters fight;
"Abide with us," as Leader, Guide,
Then shall the church increase,
And Christ's own blessing rest upon,
This "Olive Branch" of peace.

FANNY.

Olive Branch, Montreal.

RELIGIOUS.

Help in reading some Hard Passages in the Psalms.

BY REV. ROBERT C. MILLS, D. D.

Many of the Psalms are as easy to read and understand as they are full of comfort and help. They express not only what any Christian can say, but what many a Christian desires and needs to say, in such a way as no pious man could himself have devised. This is because the words are those which "David himself said by the Holy Ghost," and not by his own genius or piety. There are, however, other Psalms at which many stop and hesitate. They do not know how to appropriate them to their own use, and it is with an unuttered but conscious protest that they read them, or hear them read. They never quote them in prayer-meeting, they cannot sing them, and they rarely hear them used in the pulpit to express Christian feeling or illustrate Christian experience.

One such class of Psalms is made up of those in which the psalmist claims to be righteous, and appeals to God for justice, and not mercy, and begs Him to deal with him according to his character and deserts. More commonly we find in the Psalms fervent entreaties for the mercy of God, and for treatment which is not "after our sins, nor according to our iniquities," because "in God's sight shall no man living be justified," Ps. cxlii. 2. This latter prayer is one with which all Christians are familiar, but it seems hard to comprehend how any man except a Pharisee can enter into the presence of the Most High, and pray, "Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me," Ps. vii. 8, and stand up among his fellow worshippers and say, "The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness. . . I was also upright before Him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity, therefore hath the Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness, accord-

ing to the cleanness of my hands in His eyesight," Ps. xviii. 20, 23, 25. Making these claims for himself, the psalmist appeals not to the grace of God, but His justice. He says, "Judge me, O Lord, my God, according to my righteousness," Ps. xxxv. 24; xxxi. 7; lxxxi. 2. How and when can any one sing such a "song of Zion?"

Can we account for the language which has so often given Christians difficulty? If we mistake not, the life of David explains the matter. He was a man into whose life came a large share of conflict with enemies. They treated him as one who deserved their persecution, and had forfeited his life. When Saul and Absalom and others like them treated him as a man who had done them wrongs which justified them in defaming him, and seeking his life, he protested before God against them, and appealed to Him as the One who "judges righteously" between man and man. However much he might be a sinner before God and against God, there were no wrongs which they had suffered from him to justify their efforts to injure and destroy him.

Many others have endured the same injustice for political or religious or other reasons. Such were the cases of Joseph and Daniel and Paul. The Psalms would have been defective had they furnished no cries for men in the distress caused by such wrongs. They now have no such defect, and multitudes of sufferers from injustice and oppression have pleaded with God for defence and support and deliverance in the words of these Psalms, and rejoiced in them as most helpful and precious, in days full of darkness and danger.

There is another class of Psalms which give pious readers even greater difficulties. They are those in which desires and invocations of vengeance for injuries seem to be expressed. Such are especially Psalms xxxv. and lxix. We do not find in them the language of meekness under suffering, or of a forgiving spirit. Many Christians never have had any experience fitted to excite such feeling. If they have any enemies they have no such desires regarding them, and if they had, they would suppress them, and would not dare to give them expression in such language. If they do not actually pass over these Psalms when they come to them, they really would prefer to do so. But their greatest difficulty is, to suppose that the Holy Spirit ever could have allowed an inspired man to have and utter such feelings.

Here again the life of David furnishes us with assistance. God so ordered that life and directed the record of it, that we may test and explain his words by his actions when he had his enemies in his hands. "Actions speak louder than words," and sometimes furnish the best explanation of hard as well as smooth ones. Saul was David's most thorough and bitter enemy, while David gave him no justification or excuse for his feelings or actions. Saul's hostility probably caused some of these imprecations. At the very time when he was seeking David's life, his own life on two occasions came directly into David's hands. Had his spirit really been revenged he certainly would then have taken Saul's life. He could easily have been justified in doing so to protect himself, because Saul's avowed design was to kill him, and David's neglect of one opportunity had only proved that he spared Saul's life at the peril of his own. But with wonderful self-control he neither would lift his own hand against the king, nor suffer one of his own eager officers to do so. Again, when his own ungrateful and wicked son had driven David in his old age from his throne and home, and it "pleased Absalom well" when Ahithophel proposed to hasten after him and his followers, "and smite the king only," 2 Sam. xvii. 2, 4, it is not strange that David felt the bitter grief and sense of wrong which we find expressed in some of his Psalms. It would be most natural for us to expect

from these things that the old soldier would enter on the conflict with eagerness, if not even with exasperation against his undutiful child. Instead of that, we know what a distinct and tender charge he publicly gave the army respecting their care of Absalom's life, on the eve of the final battle between his own forces and those of the usurper. And when he was assured of Absalom's death, his deep and acute sorrow not merely broke out in his loud wailing for his son, but went so far that his brave and bold captain, Joab, reproached him for loving his enemies and hating his friends. He told him also that he conducted in such a way that any one might suppose that he would have been happy, although his army had been defeated, his throne lost, and his defenders all killed, in case that Absalom had been safe, 2 Sam. xix. 1-7.

These were his two most determined enemies. They, and others like them, must have been the cause of the apparently revengeful cries to God which we find in some of the Psalms. But when he had the opportunity to avenge himself, and to enjoy what some men regard as the pleasure of revenge, his conduct proved him to have no vindictive feelings, but, instead, to be strangely free from them. This surely gives us permission to claim so much as this, that David did not speak as a man who desires revenge, and is full of malignant hostility towards those who injure and defame him. The language of the Psalmist put in company with his actions cannot justly be interpreted in any other way. Our purpose now is merely to show what it is fair to claim that that language does not mean. We may put it in the same class as Elijah's calling down fire from heaven to kill the soldiers who came to take him, or our Lord's denunciations of the hypocrites whom He threatened with terrible judgments. We cannot repeat these things with any more ease than we can these hard Psalms. But there are times when we meet with persons whose character and conduct make us feel that some one should be able to say to them and about them just such "terrible things in righteousness" as the words of our Lord are, or those of some of the prophets, or those of David in some terrific passage of the Psalms.

In the Sepoy Rebellion, some Christians in India felt for the first time in their lives that they were where they saw and experienced the use of these Psalms. And many wronged and suffering souls in private life have in their agony from wrongs been forced to appeal to God as their only defence and helper, in language similar to this which seems to us so hard. As Dean Stanley remarks, in our ordinary easy-going lives we are in no situation to appreciate such things. But the Bible provides us by anticipation with what we need in the hardest and darkest experiences of life.

Another difficulty is found in Psalms of exactly the opposite character to those we have just discussed. They are Psalms of thanksgiving, in which David praises God for teaching "his hands to war and his fingers to fight," Psalms cxliv. i, xviii. 34. That seems to teach us not merely that "the Lord is a man of war," but a teacher of the art of war, to men who afflict their fellows with this heaviest of earthly scourges. Probably it seems to some like the song of an Indian warrior in a day of triumph. But a little care will save us from giving the language such a meaning. The 18th Psalm informs us what was its occasion. David had attained the throne for which Jehovah had selected him. Every foreign and domestic enemy had been overcome by him or for him. Especially in his protracted and perilous conflict with Saul he had contended without one blow of his hand against his enemy, and been victor. God had taught him how to fight his fight. He was thankful for His guidance and care in all his contests, and expressed his gratitude in such terms as men then used under circumstances when the sword and spear and bow demanded so much skill

and strength in the hand and fingers of the warrior. Grateful in victory, David praises God for guiding and enabling him to secure it.

There is one more difficulty which our Psalms furnish the pious reader. Unlike the others, we can charge this to our translation. Psalms iv. 3, lxxxvi. 2, are verses in which it is found. The apparent claim of the psalmist to be "holy," is one which Christians cannot repeat for themselves, nor turn into a song of theirs for use in the sanctuary, or even the closet. But almost all the scholars assure us that the difficulty has been created by our translators. The word translated "holy," they say, generally means a person who receives the favor or mercy of God, a favored or beloved one; although sometimes it describes also the character of one who has received in his heart the grace of God. Therefore Alexander, Conant, Perowne and Moll translate it, "beloved or favored one." The English reader finds this meaning in the Psalm lxxxvi. 2. The psalmist then by this word speaks of himself as one whom Jehovah had selected and raised up to do some special work, and receive some peculiar blessings. He refers to God's favor towards him, rather than his piety towards God. With this explanation, a humble Christian can read and appropriate in his devotions some sentences in the Psalms which it seemed presumptuous for him to employ while he could not understand how David could utter them in reference to himself.

In such ways as these we have found help in reading some hard places in the Psalms, and have written them out hoping that they might be of service to others.—Watchman.

A Chrysalis.

Walking through the fields upon a summer day I saw a tall asclepias with its regular leaves trimmed here and there, as though a playful child, with scissors, had sought to improve nature's pattern.

I looked closely and soon saw the little toiler. Some of you will pronounce him loathsome; to me he was pretty. If he had eyes I did not see them, but a pair of sensitive feelers served the same purpose. Rings of black and gold separated with white spanned his body, and all along were ever so many little feet, not legs for locomotion, but just a little point of his skin gathered up so he could attach himself to the leaf, while the back pair seemed made for grasping. Here he stood eating. With the motion of the head and the great capacity of its mouth, he seemed to wear away the leaf, as the farmer does the meadow, each bite a clip of the scythe, and each succeeding the other until the space of a swath was eaten clean. So the notch grew in the leaf.

I thought to myself, "Only made for eating, but I should like to watch you."

A burdock leaf made a basket, and into this several of these rapacious little toilers were tumbled, and their work with them. I straightened the leaf upon my table, put a screen over them, and watched their operations, being nearly grown I had not many days to wait. The first I observed finished eating, and after much anxious searching found a place which suited, and thus suspended apparently went to sleep.

I watched unremittingly, and the next day noticed that the body writhed and its brightness was fading; indeed the contortions became so great I feared it would fall, and in pity I witnessed its seeming pain, when suddenly I saw a break in the skin, and sooner than I can tell, the wide mouth, the clinging feet, the guiding antennae, now no longer needed, were all cast off, and before me hung the oval, pale green, dotted with yellow, almost transparent chrysalis.

After many weeks were traced within it the wings of a butterfly, and, impatient, not many days after I took it

in my hand, when the fragile cell parted, and out crept the gaudy, delicate butterfly, not quite ready to soar aloft, for his wings were small and heavy. He firmly fastened his feet, let his wings hang down, and visible to us, yet the way invisible, they soon grew to perfect size.

I watched another. An enemy had found him. True, he ate and in time laid off his useless outward cover, but never made a butterfly. The parasite sought its vitals for the food of its own offspring. The wary little fly had stung its eggs deep in the growing worm, and as they matured they took away its life; and as these restless little feeders sought an entrance into the light, to lie down, in turn to wait their development into winged insects, they left my beautiful chrysalis empty and without life.—Advance.

An Ancient Christian Document.

Dr. H. B. Smith, of the Union Theological Seminary, communicates to the *Evangelist* an account of a notable discovery recently made in the East. The two Epistles of Clement to the Corinthians have been found in what appears to be an almost complete manuscript, filling gaps in the existing codices—one hiatus in the First Epistle filled by 129½ new lines, and one in the Second by about 173 new lines. Each line contains about 25 letters. The new manuscript is independent of any previously known, and serves to correct the other manuscripts in several places. The first Epistle is a letter of the church at Rome to the church at Corinth, without any appearance of hierarchical assumptions. The genuineness of the "Second Epistle," so called, as a production of Clement, is not now defended by any scholars. Dr. Harnach, of Leipzig, puts the date of it at about the middle of the Second Century. It is an exhortation—"the oldest complete homily which we possess."

The first Epistle of Clement has had, as Dr. Harnach points out, a noteworthy history. After the canonical books it is undoubtedly one of the earliest products of Christian literature, if not the very earliest, important for determining the primitive relations of Christian churches. And yet it is a striking fact that after the beginning of the fourth century there are almost no traces of the use of this Epistle in the Western Church. Jerome is an exception; but his learning was drawn chiefly from the East. This neglect of it is doubtless owing to the growth of the Roman hierarchy, whose pretensions found no basis in Clement. There was a large fictitious Clementine literature in the West (the Pseudo-Clementines); but this was shaped in the Roman interest. Even the Western collections of the Papal letters and acts (the Pseudo-Isidorian and the *Liber Pontificalis*), do not contain the Epistles of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, the first of which is undoubtedly the oldest extant document of a Roman bishop. And the reason is plain: for of Peter and his primacy, and of the Bishop of Rome as his successor, not a word is said.—N. Y. *Examiner & Chron.*

CONVERTS IN INDIA.—Two converts were recently baptized at the Christian colony, Basharatpore, in India. One was a Brahmin, who, before going into the water, gave up his rosary and his sacred thread, and suffered the sacred hair-lock to be cut from his head. The other was a fakir, who had wandered over the country, seeking some community in the piety of which he might repose confidence, and everywhere finding the fakirs given to covetousness and duplicity. When their experience was stated, it was found in both cases that no single labourer had brought them to Christ; but that God had linked the names of a number of Christian agents into the chain of their conversion. One had preached to them, another had set them a Christian example until at last, through this combined influence, they yielded themselves to the Saviour.

In old times church government was strict enough. In the record book of an old Connecticut church, under date of 1702, appears the following: For making a noise in church, Ann Bolton, spinster, is to sit three Sundays in the poor pew and pay a fine of five shillings.