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Entre Nous.

SOME TOPICS.

God's Sociableness.

MR. LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH has issued a volume of Selected Passages from *Donne's Sermons* with an introductory essay (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press; 6s. net). How many living literary men would have undertaken to read through the three immense folios for this or any other purpose? Mr. Pearsall Smith has read through them 'more than once.' He calls himself a secular-minded person. And he tells us that 'the purpose underlying his selection is not theological, didactic, nor even historical. It is concerned with Donne as a man, as an artist and writer, with his personal accent and speaking voice; first of all with the man himself, and only in the second place with the doctrines he expounded and the age he lived in.' He has chosen passages which illustrate what Professor Grierson has called 'the unique quality, the weight, fervour and wealth, of Donne's eloquence.' He challenges any one who may think that praise exaggerated to 'read—and above all, read aloud—some of the following pages, the description for instance of God's bounty, which Professor Saintsbury has called unsurpassed, perhaps never equalled for the beauty of its rhythm and the Shakespearean magnificence of its diction; or the great peroration on "falling out of the hands of God," in which Donne sums up in a sombre and terrible sentence—one of the longest and most splendid sentences in the English language—the horror of the deprivation of God's love, and of eternal banishment from His presence.'

And now, for an example: *God's Sociableness*.—'Our first step then in this first part, is, the sociableness, the communicableness of God; He loves holy meetings, he loves the communion of Saints, the household of the faithful: *Delicia ejus*, says Solomon, his delight is to be with the Sons of men, and that the Sons of men should be with him: Religion is not a melancholy; the spirit of God is not a dampe; the Church is not a grave: it is a fold, it is an Arke, it is a net, it is a city, it is a kingdome, not onely a house, but a house that hath many mansions in it: still it is a plurall thing, consisting of many: and

very good grammarians amongst the Hebrews have thought, and said, that that *name*, by which God notifies himself to the world, in the very beginning of *Genesis*, which is *Elohim*, as it is a plurall word there, so it hath no singular: they say we cannot name God, but plurally: so sociable, so communicable, so extensive, so derivative of himself, is God, and so manifold are the beames, and the emanations that flow out from him.'

The Suffering Servant.

Professor A. R. Gordon, D.Litt., D.D., has already taught us some things about Isaiah in his volume on the Prophets of the Old Testament. Now he gives a whole book to the great prophet, translating anew and expounding as he goes. The title is *The Faith of Isaiah, Statesman and Evangelist* (James Clarke & Co.; 6s. net). Both parts of the book are covered, but a clear distinction is made between them. On approaching 'the great prophecy of comfort' (Is 40-55), Dr. Gordon says: 'We breathe no longer the spacious atmosphere of Isaiah's day. The kingdom has fallen, and the people lie prostrate and suffering, almost beyond endurance, though the days of their bondage are nearly ended. The local scenery, too, is far removed from the pleasant hills and valleys of Palestine. When these are introduced, it is with the wistful glance of the exile, fondly recalling his native land. The ground trod by the prophet's feet is the monotonous sand of Babylonia, blistered by the fierce blaze of the unclouded sun, and watered by sluggish streams and channels. The allusions that are thickly scattered through these chapters are likewise Babylonian: the temples and manufactories of idols, the processions of images, the gods and altars, diviners and astrologers, the crowd of merchants thronging the bazaars, the shipping, the treasures of gold and silver and precious stones, the trees and plants, even the animals. The great names that crossed the stage in Isaiah's lifetime have as completely vanished. The central figure is neither Hezekiah nor Sennacherib, but Cyrus, the coming deliverer, already represented in the flowing tide of his conquests. The literary flavour of the prophecy is as distinctive.'

How does Professor Gordon understand the Suffering Servant? The Suffering Servant, he says, 'is neither an individual nor the incarnation of an ideal—whether the personified Genius of Israel or the spiritual "Israel within Israel"—but the actual Israel "regarded in the light of its purpose in the mind of God."' In this interpretation he sees a lesson for our time. 'We are all so closely bound together by the ties of common humanity that the innocent suffer for the sins of the guilty, and on the other hand the guilty are saved by the sufferings of the innocent. The unspeakable agony of Belgium, Poland, Serbia, Russia, and Armenia, the endurance unto death of our bravest and best, and the patient anguish of loving hearts in all the war-spent nations of the earth, are thus no vain sacrifice, but the pledge of our redemption from every form of tyranny, oppression and barbarism, for through them the Lord and Father of mankind is bringing to birth in our midst the "new heavens and earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet 3¹³).'

American Ideals.

Messrs. Constable are the publishers of a volume of *American Ideals* (6s. 6d.). The editors are Professor Norman Foerster and Assistant Professor W. W. Pierson, Jr., of the University of North Carolina. The volume contains the historical great speeches (or extracts therefrom) which express the ideals of the political life of America. There are Patrick Henry's call to war, Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, two speeches by Daniel Webster, Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address and his wonderful Gettysburg Address. There is a fine address by Roosevelt on A Charter of Democracy, and there are four addresses by Woodrow Wilson. The last chapter is a selection of estimates by foreign writers of the mind of the United States. The last is Mr. Balfour's speech before the New York Chamber of Commerce on May 12, 1917.

Can American ideals be expressed in a sentence? Yes, in three words: Liberty, Justice, Hope. Patrick Henry said Liberty: 'I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!' Thomas Jefferson said Justice: 'Equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political.' Lincoln first gave Hope: 'With high hope for the future.' Woodrow Wilson brought

all three together [to an audience of newly naturalized foreigners]: 'If you come into this great nation as you have come, voluntarily, seeking something that we have to give, all that we have to give is this. We cannot exempt you from work; we cannot exempt you from the strife and the heart-breaking burden of the struggle of the day—that is common to mankind everywhere. We cannot exempt you from the loads you must carry; we can only make them light by the spirit in which they are carried. That is the spirit of hope, it is the spirit of liberty, it is the spirit of justice.' Is there anything else? Is anything lacking yet?

The Worst Line.

The volume called *More Literary Recreations*, by Sir Edward Cook (Macmillan; 7s. 6d. net), is just as good to read as the first volume was, a rare enough thing with second volumes gathered out of the magazines. And the first volume was very good indeed. There was the feeling for style, the choice of topic, the lightness of touch, the sense of fellowship. All this is evident and excellent in the new book also. The very preface is a charm. Sir Edward Cook returns to the question of the best and the worst—a study in superlatives. Some one has sent him this from Macaulay's Lays as the worst line of poetry in existence:

And now, mine own dear little girl, there is no way but this.

And he thinks it would not be easily beaten as an example of comic bathos. But he beats it. 'It is attributed to "a friend who is passionately devoted to the study of the laws of sanitation and mortality. He carries his enthusiasm on the subject so far as to tinge it with his view of every conceivable matter—religious, political, and literary. He once wrote an anonymous letter to the Laureate, commenting on the lines in the *Vision of Sin*:

Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

He observed, with great truth, that if this statement were correct the population of the world would remain stationary, and urged the poet to alter the lines thus:

Every moment dies a man,
And one and one-sixteenth is born.

He owned that the exact figure was one, decimal point, ought, four, seven; but (as he said) some allowance must be made for metre."

The longest and most instructive essay in this volume is that on the Greek Anthology. Many epigrams and mottoes are quoted in clever translations. Of one famous epigram ascribed, he thinks correctly, to Plato, he gives no fewer than eight English versions. He prefers this version by Dr. A. J. Butler:

Thine eyes are fixed upon the starry skies,
Thou star of mine.
Would I were heaven with multitudinous eyes
To gaze on thine.

Theudas.

The series of 'Translations of Early Documents' edited by Dr. Oesterley and Dr. Box is a scholarly series. But few of its volumes will be welcomed by the ordinary Churchgoer so gladly as the *Selections from Josephus* which Mr. H. St. J. Thackeray has made (S.P.C.K.; 5s. net). It is a wonder that Mr. Thackeray, who is one of the most accomplished and industrious of living scholars, has missed the article on 'Josephus' in the *ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS*. It is written by Niese, the editor of the best edition of Josephus' works. Mr. Thackeray's Introduction is itself as good as an encyclopædia article. Every word of it is well weighed. And Josephus needs judgment in his editors.

In the Appendix of Additional Notes he discusses the alleged reference to Jesus Christ. His decision (against Burkitt and Harnack) is that 'the tone of the passage suggests a Christian hand.' He does not think that Jesus seemed important enough to be even mentioned by the great Jewish historian of His time.

For the other debated question whether St. Luke had read Josephus and was misled by him regarding Theudas, Mr. Thackeray's conclusion is: 'That the passage in *Acts* is to be explained by a casual perusal of Josephus by St. Luke is highly improbable for the following reasons:—

'(1) St. Luke gives the number of the followers

of Theudas as "about four hundred"; Josephus writes "most of the common people." Clearly St. Luke had access to some source other than Josephus.

'(2) The carelessness attributed to St. Luke in the supposed use of Josephus is not what we should expect from the professions of the writer of the prologue to the third Gospel and from the handling of his sources in the earlier work.

'(3) If there has been error, it is older than St. Luke and goes back to his authority. Torrey in the above-mentioned work seems to have proved conclusively that Acts i.-xv. is based on an Aramaic source, to which St. Luke was "singularly faithful."

NEW POETRY.

Rose Macaulay.

In *Three Days*, by Rose Macaulay (Constable; 2s. 6d. net), the war is again present, almost with the poignant insistence of its bitterest days, so keen is the poet's sensibility, so sure the stroke of her pen. Yet it is not easy to quote. Take this—the war is at least evidently over:

LONDON AT NIGHT.

How brief time ago we nightly trafficked heaven
Scanning the planets seven, and flinging up the
skies

Bright ghostly arms of spies, white as snow!

Lest any fearful things should ride beneath the
moon,

We closely did commune with the pilgrims of
the sky,

Till earth's self seemed to fly, on black wings.

But since the set of Mars we have veiled the
face of night;

We walk bemused by light, and have lost
heaven's stair,

And the great booth's gaudy flare blinds the
stars.

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