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the only rendering that can be given to the word *στυγρός*, what could the phrase have possibly conveyed to those peasants of Galilee? I believe the effect of such words on their minds would be twofold:

(1) Utter confusion on being invited, even in a metaphor, to face a cruel and immediate death (for the Cross was never carried by a prisoner except when he was on the way to execution), and to become the most dreadful object a Jew could think of—'the curse of God' (see Dt 21²³, Ac 5³⁰, Gal 3¹³).

(2) As crucifixion was not a Jewish custom but a Roman practice, they would see in the words an implied conflict with Rome.

The first of these could have had no power of appeal; the second was the very thing Christ did not want them to look for in the service of the 'kingdom.'

I read the phrase *ἀπάτω τὸν στυγρὸν αὐτοῦ* in the light of the great emphasis Christ laid in His early preaching on the distinction between the 'world' and the 'kingdom,' and on their mutual exclusiveness. To drive this home to Nicodemus He used that striking metaphor, 'Ye must be born again.' Before professing the new allegiance there must be a clean cut away from the old, for even 'the friendship of the world is enmity with God.'

J. DAVIES BRYAN.

Alexandria, Egypt.

Interpretation of 2 Kings viii. 10, 11.

DID Elisha really suggest the assassination of Benhadad? The famous scene between the prophet and Hazael, the envoy of the Syrian king, has raised certain difficulties owing partly to the text and partly to the interpretation of the passage. If we follow the K^thîbh in v.¹⁰ (אָל), we have a simple and straightforward oracle on Benhadad's health—'Thou shalt certainly not recover, and Yahweh has shewed me that he will certainly die.' This is an announcement of the king's death. When Hazael carries back the report, he deliberately falsifies it, converting it into a favourable oracle.

The Q^rê (לֵב), however, has the support of all the Versions, and is doubtless the original reading. Thus the oracle of Elisha gains a totally different significance: 'Say to him, thou shalt certainly recover, and Yahweh has shewed me that he will

certainly die.' The oracle appears on the surface to be contradictory. Many scholars, e.g. Skinner in *The Century Bible*, see in the latter half a suggestion to Hazael, which he duly carried out by smothering Benhadad. Is this interpretation necessary? Is there not a simpler explanation?

V.¹¹ supplies us with it, even although it brings forward other difficulties. The LXX has a text very similar to the Hebrew, reading, however, וַיַּעֲמֵר for וַיַּעֲמֵר—'And he (Elisha) stood before him and fixed [his countenance] till he was ashamed.'

The Vulgate takes Hazael as subject, 'And (Hazael) stood before him, and was confused to the point of blushing,' *Conturbatus* representing עָשָׁה of the Hebrew text, but pointed עָשָׂה. What is this but the guilty confusion of the Syrian officer? Hazael was ashamed, because the prophet had read his secret thoughts.

Another view of v.¹¹ has been offered, e.g., in Moffatt's *Translation of the O.T.*: 'And he (Elisha) steadied his face (the stare of ecstasy), and was appalled (עָשָׂה) in the extreme (עַד-בְּרֵאשִׁית).' The phrase עַד-בְּרֵאשִׁית, however, always involves a feeling of shame, cf. Jg 3²⁶, 2 K 2¹⁷, and is unfitted to describe the horror falling on Elisha in view of the coming disasters. Besides, the position of אֵלֹהִים אִישׁ as subject of the whole verse is most unusual in Hebrew.

The simplest explanation of the oracle is Elisha's reading of Hazael's guilty purpose. The disease of Benhadad was by no means fatal, but he was to die by some other means. The steady gaze of the prophet let Hazael understand the significance of the oracle. It is to be noted that Hazael suppressed the latter half of the message, and hurried on the assassination; for Benhadad was recovering. There is no need to suggest that Elisha inspired the crime, which was to bring such woes on Israel.

H. A. WILLIAMSON.

Lochee.

Note on ἀγαπάω and φιλέω

FROM a consideration of their use to translate the same Hebrew in Gn 37^{3, 4}, Mr. Highfield concludes that the distinction usually made between these words cannot be maintained. To me, however, the change from ἀγαπάω to φιλέω suggests a nice discrimination on the part of the translators, rather than establishes an equality between the words. Jacob loved Joseph with a discerning love based upon his knowledge of the lad's character, and perhaps also because he anticipated for him a

peculiar place in the development of the Divine purposes, whereas the brethren could only perceive an inordinate affection in their father's treatment of his younger son.

παρὰ cum acc. institutes a comparison with the eleven; Jacob loved them all, but Joseph most of all, more than he loved any of the others. ἐκ presents the point of view of the eleven, to whom it seemed that Jacob loved Joseph to the exclusion of the rest. In making this distinction, which they did not find in the Hebrew, it seems the translators were psychologically correct.

In Jn 3³⁵ 5²⁰ again, the choice of words seems to be appropriate. In the former passage the speaker (or writer) has in mind the eternal relationship, the unchanging love of approbation based upon judgment, unemotional, deliberate, which was the cause of the timeless and unqualified committal of 'all things' to the Son, who is, as He ever has been, because of that love, the Revealer and the Agent of the Father.

In the latter passage the Lord is speaking as the Incarnate Son of His present relation to, and experience of, His Father. As the Father does and shows, the Son sees and does. The obedience of the Son, His subjection in all things to the Father, is reciprocated in the tender intimacy of affection.

After His resurrection the Lord demanded of Peter whether he loved Him with the love that faces the issue and, clear-eyed, at whatever cost, denies self (Jn 21¹⁵⁻¹⁷). Well Peter knows that he has shown the very reverse of this. But that he loves the Lord with the personal affection that comes from intimate association, he must, despite appearances, insist. We can, and do, hurt the objects of our affection, and often we sacrifice them to our own exigencies. But not so with the objects of that other, deeper love which is born of the will, and which proves itself in deliberate

subordination of every self-interest to the interests of its object. Would the Lord acknowledge the poor affection that Peter claimed? So when the Lord met him upon his own ground and probed that claim also, the breaking-point was reached. Thereupon Peter appealed from his own affection to the love that is perfect in knowledge, that is never taken unawares by the wayward instability of the human heart, nor ever sterilized by it.

In committing His lambs to Peter's care the Lord acknowledged Peter's affection and encouraged him to hope that he would yet come to share the Good Shepherd's love, and find his opportunity to prove it in his care of the 'little ones' of the flock, even at the cost of his life.

C. F. HOGG.

Highgate.

Indignor quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.

AN apposite case occurs on p. 109 of Professor H. B. Swete's posthumous work, *The Parables of the Kingdom*. In a left-hand column one there reads the usual Greek account of 'the parable of the two sons.' One is amazed, however, on turning to the English rendering in the right-hand column, to find the story topsy-turvy. According to the English version it is the first son—the Jew's—who at the outset says, 'I will not,' but afterwards repents and goes. Consistently enough, the second son—the Gentile's—starts with a promise of obedience, but fails to implement his promise. This consistency is carried even to the length of making the bystanders give the palm to the first son.

J. R. MACKAY.

Edinburgh.

Entre Nous.

Point and Illustration.

A book which should not be missed by the working minister is *What to Preach*, by the Rev. Henry Sloane Coffin, D.D. (Hodder & Stoughton; 7s. 6d. net). It contains five lectures which deal respectively with expository, doctrinal, ethical, pastoral, and evangelistic preaching. And to particularize further we might say that it is with the technique of preaching that the lectures deal. But Dr. Coffin

knows that more is needed than technique. 'Never let us forget that it is flame, and flame in which a man's self is being consumed, which illumines and warms. And that this may never die down let us tell ourselves that saying of Christ's which evangelists had not room for in their narratives, but which the memory of some disciple would not let go: "Whoso is near Me is near the fire."' Having made this clear, let us turn to some of Dr. Coffin's prac-