

It is well to read this modest but valuable contribution in connection with Prof. Bissell's articles. He confines his discussion to the single point: the teaching of Christ Himself as to the Mosaic authority of the Pentateuch. This is certainly explicit and important. See, for instance, Deut. xxxi: 9-11. A history of the various critical views on this subject may be found in the *Presb. Review* for January, 1883, by Prof. C. A. Briggs. The latest hypothesis, known as the Reuss-Graaf theory, demoralizes Jewish history, and, by logical sequence, the common faith of Christendom as to revelation and inspiration. And the tendency of modern thought is largely in this direction. Still, we have some able defenders of the old faith in such men as Profs. Green and Patton, of Princeton; Prof. Beecher, of Auburn; President Gregory, and Dr. Rufus P. Stebbins, and many others.

THEOLOGICAL READJUSTMENTS. By J. H. Ryland, D.D., *North American Review* (Jan.), 12 pp. As indicating the drift of loose and destructive criticism, this essay is significant. A brief extract will give its gist and animus: "It [a competent, candid scholarship] frankly confesses that some of the Biblical books are of doubtful date; that certain passages once reputed historical, are of traditional authority only; that others are poetical delineations simply; and that many of the 'prophecies' and 'types,' which expositors have found thickly strewn through the Old Testament, are purely fanciful in the meaning and application commonly put upon them. . . . These conclusions of modern criticism may be startling to men of conservative views in our churches, but they are accepted by nearly all men of a thoroughly scholarly training to-day." We marvel at this last assertion. It is conspicuously at fault, as every one thoroughly conversant with the best scholarship of the times well knows.

THE SACRAMENTS AND THE CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH. By Henry J. Van Dyke, D.D., *Presbyterian Review* (Jan.), 28 pp. Increased attention is being given to the relations of baptized children to the Church. We have had of late several noticeable papers on the subject in our Reviews, no one of which is more deserving of profound attention than this one from the able pen of Dr. Van Dyke. It will be regarded by many as advocating extreme views as to the relation of the children of believers to the Church. But we believe there is no middle ground. His chief position is impregnable, unless we yield the whole ground and regard and treat the children of believing parents in the Church just as we do the children of unbelievers, who are out of covenant relations. He fortifies his position also strongly from the standards of the Presbyterian Church, and from eminent writers who hold the Reformed theory in opposition to the Puritan, including such eminent authority as Dr. Charles Hodge. His position is, that "the children of all professors of the true religion are on that account fellow-members with their

parents of the visible Church," and entitled to the ordinances. The right of an infant to baptism rests upon its church membership, and its membership is based upon the professed faith and obedience of one or both of its parents; the sacraments are not merely commemorative rites, but "effectual means of salvation." We have not space to outline the argument. The subject is of unspeakable importance. "It not only concerns the spiritual interests of our children; it touches the organic life and power of the Church at every point. The revival that is most needed, and without which all others will necessarily be superficial and short-lived, is a revival of household religion. . . . the coming of the Comforter, to abide in the Church forever, the fulfilment of the promises which are to 'believers and their children'; the unity of the Church founded upon the unity of the family as its germ, and the conversion of the world, not merely by additions from without, but largely and most effectively by development from within."

IS OUR CIVILIZATION PERISHABLE? By Judge J. A. Jameson, *North American Review* (March), 11 pp. This brief paper, written in a spirit of great moderation and candor, furnishes food for serious reflection, if not anxiety, to every patriot and Christian. The writer shows that there are causes at work by which the fair fabric of our boasted civilization may be destroyed. These causes he classifies as physical, moral, and moral-physical. As the first is purely speculative, it is not seriously to be taken into account. Chief among the moral causes he names "the prevalence in current literature of principles hostile to society," "corrupting its life-blood," especially immorality. He emphasizes Matthew Arnold's warning against "the prevailing tendency of French imaginative literature." Other causes he names are, to "confound all moral distinctions," a "perverted moral sense in the blood of a people," a "mistaken view of the relations between capital and labor," and a "growing aversion of the higher ranks of society to marriage, and to having offspring, and the means used to prevent it." If this aversion is to prevail, and the growth of families be prevented, "the doom of our civilization is irrecoverably fixed."

THE SOUDAN AND ITS FUTURE. By Sir Samuel W. Baker, *Contemporary Review*, vide *Eclectic* (March), 12 pp. Both the subject and the writer will attract attention at the present juncture. "What is the Soudan?" "Is the Soudan worth keeping?" "Why not give it up?" are the questions considered by the writer. His description of the region is clear, graphic and intelligent. His suggestions for its improvement are the fruits of a thorough, practical knowledge of the country and its people, and his reasons for its preservation to Egypt are many and cogent. It is a timely contribution, and helps to give one a more intelligent view of the condition of things as to both the present and future of "Soudan" than is generally prevalent.