

human nature in its selfishness is immutable, they discredit the redemption of Jesus Christ.

The fact that the object of both employer and employee is gain naturally brings them into conflict. Nearly, if not quite, all the questions which arise between Labour and Capital spring from selfish competition. The effects of this are most keenly felt by the wage earners. If consumers had the spirit of service, they would be far more anxious to render a full equivalent for what they buy than drive a close bargain. If manufacturers had the spirit of service, they would not think of grinding the faces of their operatives that they might better serve the general public. If all obeyed the law of service, it would so divide the world's toil that all would have time not only for rest and recreation, but also for study and the enrichment of life. If idle classes were inspired by the desire to serve, it would shorten hours of toil and increase its rewards. If workmen had this spirit there would be no more dishonest work. Society can never be perfected until this becomes the universally accepted law of life. This is evident the moment we see that the perfect society must be a perfect organism. Society is not an aggregate of human beings, and cannot make progress without more perfect organization.

We must have faith in the power of righteousness to cast out evil. We need a revival of the Puritan faith in the practicability of righteousness, doubt of which is the great skepticism and weakness of the Church to-day. Omnipotence is inspired, not by the love of gain, but by the spirit of service.

INFLUENCE OF THE EXILE IN BABYLON ON JEWISH THOUGHT.

BEING A SHORT STATEMENT OF PROF. FERGUSON'S SUNDAY AFTERNOON ADDRESS.

The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel were contemporaries and in tone of thought and style of language often closely resemble one another. Ezekiel has in consequence been accused of plagiarism, but on closer examination there is a marked difference between the two teachers. In Jeremiah there is an elegiac tenderness which is the reflex of his gentle, calm and introspective spirit, while Ezekiel comes forward with abruptness, iron firmness and consistency. He had been carried off to Babylon some years before the destruction of Jerusalem, and so did not witness the success that called forth the long plaintive wail of Jeremiah's lamentations. But in his new home he was brought to realize with equal force the destruction of the Hebrew national life. The Jews seemed to have been allowed to settle where they would, to preserve their religion and to engage in remunerative pursuits. That the pure Jewish religion should be tainted in some in-

dividuals by the idolatries of their neighbors, that their language should become mixed with the children is only what might have been expected. In contemplating these dispersed communities of Jewish captives, in whom the national life was dead, and even it would seem the religious life also; the thought would naturally arise "Can these bones live?" Is it possible to imagine a resurrection of these dead members to a new national, to a new religious life? The luxury and magnificence of Babylon, the facilities which she offered for commercial pursuits, her social entertainments, the love of her people for music and festivity, appealed most strongly to the imagination of the people like the Jews. The captives were not numerous. They consisted chiefly of princes, nobles, priests, with a small addition of artisans in wood and iron. But it was the kernel, the flower of the nation, and it was just these whom we might expect to be most influenced by the attractions of their new home.

While there was very much there to induce the Jews to acquiesce in the state of things in which they were placed, we find that there was an earnest longing for a restoration. As time passed it is probable that the Jewish religion became a subject of derision and insult for the Chaldeans. But the Jews who have always prided themselves on their religious advantages would meet their sneers with a derision equally bitter. Mutual contempt is the strongest preventive of any union between peoples. A peculiar wail of mingled sadness and hope is noticeable in all the Jewish literature of this period. There is a deep pathos in this suffering of the Israelites, and if their songs sometimes express scornful derision, the majority are songs of self-renunciation and of sorrowful penitence.

But this isolation had the effect of making them turn with a special interest to their past history. Now began the collection of the old Jewish records, and to Baruch the scribe and the pupils of Jeremiah is attributed the beginning of the formation of the Jewish canon. Before the captivity there had been among the Jews a disposition to separate from the worship of God and to substitute therefor the new forms of that worship. When religion becomes ritualistic it is apt to lose its spiritual character. The religion of the captives had lost its local character, ritualism had almost wholly ceased, and religion of necessity became more spiritual. It was now really a cry to God out of the fulness of the human heart. A deeper spirituality may be marked in all the later Jewish writings, indeed the very idea of the character of the Messiah underwent a change. He is no longer the Son of David coming in His martial might, but rather "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." In the writings of this