

"After that ye have known God," or rather *are known* of God, a knowledge implying or resting upon a close personal communion. Since Jehovah had already entered into such intimate relations with the patriarch, in order to perpetuate a godly seed, and so ultimately be a blessing to all nations, it was proper that he should be informed of the impending judgment and of the reason for its infliction.

NEW READING OF FAMILIAR TEXTS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

No. I.

By G. W. SAMSON, D.D.

"*Sin offering*" for "*Sin*."—Gen. iv: 7.

AMONG truths that are vitally important, that of the grounds on which man's service can be made acceptable to God must, from the nature of the case, be made to take the lead in a revision of the English Scriptures. The statement given by Moses as to Cain and Abel is first in place and importance on this central and absorbing theme of revelation. The contrast is palpable between two ways of securing divine acceptance; the first, "If thou *doest well* shalt thou not be accepted?" is unquestioned as to its natural and necessary meaning; and perhaps the statement following, the second proviso, "If thou *doest not well*," would be as plain if prior opinion did not divert the student from the laws of legitimate interpretation.

The jurists' laws of the interpretation of human statutes are always first to be regarded; since, unless a record is proved beforehand to be figurative, its statements are to be regarded as framed on the laws of man's common speech, in which men seek, as they ordinarily do, to present their thought in language as distinct as possible for the guidance of their fellows.

The jurists' laws of interpretation, specially applicable to Moses' writings, always designated as "The Law," are substantially these: To be assured of the author's meaning in any statement, observe; first, his ordinary use of words;

second, the immediate connection in which he employs them; third, the subject which calls forth his entire work; fourth, the history that leads to the statement; fifth, the consequences of ascribing one or the other meaning to his words. Applying these rules successively to Gen. iv: 7, it is to be observed: First, the word "*hattâth*," rendered sin in the received version, is used about 130 times by Moses, in ninety-one of which cases it is rendered "sin offering," while in three others it is rendered by the yet more distinctive term "purification." Again the word "*râbâts*," rendered "lieth," used thirty times in the Old Testament, is invariably used to indicate the quiet repose of domestic animals, the only exception (Gen. xlix: 2) being one that "proves the rule," since the lion, when perfectly gorged, "*couches*" as inoffensive as a lamb. The only two interpretations given to these words, the former modern, are these: that Cain is *warned* that if he "*does not well*," sin, like a lion, "*crouches*," not "*couches*," at the door to spring upon him; while the other, the early Christian, is, that a "sin offering," like Abel's lamb, lies close at his door ready for the offering of "faith." Second, the immediate connection, "and unto thee shall be his desire," compels the latter interpretation. Moses is alluding, as in the case of Esau and Jacob, to the natural Asiatic law of primogeniture; according to which the elder brother, as the superior in age and experience, is the natural "keeper" (v. 9.) of the younger; this promise has force when the latter interpretation is given; but it is meaningless if the former interpretation be given. Third, the subject-matter of revelation is *not* to teach *physical* science in the first and second chapters of Genesis, nor *moral* science in the third and fourth chapters; but its end is to teach the plan of *redemption* from sin. This Jesus constantly taught in his constant statements like this: "Moses wrote of Me;" "Search the Scriptures; they are they that testify of Me." This Paul develops at length in the epistle to the Hebrews; and this the

LIGH

By R.
RAJ
N. I
MAJ
the Je
creatic
were t
differe