

BOOK NOTICE.

BIBLE TEACHINGS IN NATURE, by the REV. HUGH MACMILLAN, LL.D., F. R. S. E. (London: Macmillan & Co.) A book for the Parish Library.

1. *Pleiades and Orion*—Job xxxviii. 31. If we examine the text in the original, we find that the Chaldaic word translated in our version Pleiades is *Chimah*—a hinge-pivot or axle . . . now strange to say, the group of stars thus characterized has recently been ascertained, by a series of independent calculations—in utter ignorance of the meaning of the text—to be actually the hinge or axle round which the solar system revolves. . . . What a lofty significance does the question of the Almighty receive from this interpretation? "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades?"

2. *Ice-morsels*—Psalm cxlvii. 17. The force of gravitation and the action of the sun caused the glaciers continually to crack and strain over their rocky beds; and huge pinnacles of ice that seemed motionless and steadfast as the peaks overhead were, in a single instant, hurled headlong with a noise like thunder down a steep abyss, or into a wide crevasse, and ground to atoms in the fall. Each sight and sound proclaimed the incessant tendency of material forces towards the equilibrium which is yet unattainable. . . . Never before did I hear the voice of the Eternal, in the sounds of earth, so unmistakable, so impressive, as in the utterances of these glaciers. Never before did I realize the weight of meaning in these apparently simple words of the Psalmist, "He scattereth His Hoarfrost like ashes. He casteth forth His ice like morsels."

3. *Grass*—S. Luke xii. 28. The Creator has repealed the same pattern more frequently in the grass tribe than in any other order of vegetation, as if in admiration of its grace and simplicity. Its exquisite perfection enables us to see some deeper aspect of the Divine character than the mere intelligence of a contriver—enables us to see God's care for helplessness and lowliness—His care for beauty as an end and not as a means. It impresses us with the perfect wisdom of an Infinite Spirit, and not with the limited ingenuity of a finite mind. . . . Standing on the green sward each blade of grass whispers to the inner ear, "Take of thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground;" and the response of every devout spirit must be, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not."

4. *The Trees of the Lord*—Psalm civ. 16. The cedars are indeed the trees of the Lord." The peculiar expression, however, must not be limited to one particular species of cedar. They are the trees of the Lord on account of the peculiarities of their structure: on account of the antiquity of their type and the majesty of their appearance.

5. *Corn*—Psalm lxxv. 9. Corn is the special gift of God to man. Corn plants were utterly unknown through all the geological periods—it has never been found in a wild state—it is universally diffused. In having year after year to sow and reap his fields, and in thus having his daily bread measured out to him and his daily bread only, he is taught in the most impressive way the solemn lesson of his entire dependence upon God. "Thou visitest the earth and waterest it. Thou preparest them corn when thou hast so provided for it."

6. *Blasting and Mildew*—Haggai ii. 17. The reign of flowers is over—only a few autumn ones linger lovingly—the mushroom tribe begin to appear—they are plants in masquerade, but they are working problems which have puzzled a Liebig and a Lavoisier. The higher organism decays, and rises again in the form of a lower organism. There may be some likeness to the resurrection of the wicked—the second death. There are four diseases in corn produced by fungi—gout, bunt, rust and mildew,—one on the straw, another on the leaves and chaff; a third attacks the flower. All other plants are the prey of some species of fungus. "Let us rear an altar and besought by the mercies of God dedicate the threshing instruments and the first fruits, and yield ourselves a living sacrifice unto the great Husbandman, and thus shall we fear no blasting or mildew."

7. *The Leap*—Gen. ii. 4, 5.—On the meditative mind of Goethe on one occasion dawned the bright idea, that the flower of a plant is not, as is

commonly supposed, an added or separate organ, but only the highest development, or rather the transformation of its leaves—that all the parts of a plant are mere modifications of a leaf. It created a complete revolution in Botany—has done more to lift the veil of mystery from nature, and to interpret the plans and purposes of the Creator than all the previous labors of botanists. All could examine the typology of the leaf, the changeable and the most enduring, hang together in one unbroken chain, held in the hands of the Infinite and the Unchangeable, of which we see a few links, but the beginning and the end we see not, etc.

8. *The teaching of the earth*—Job xii. 8. "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." Man attains dominion over the earth, to be again subdued by it. If the earth was a wise and eloquent teacher in the days of Job, how much wiser is she now! The lesson which earth teaches, it may be said, is a very sombre and depressing one, but it is also very salutary. The depths of the earth, as well as the surface of the earth, teach us the solemn lesson of change and also the unchangeableness of Him who has these depths in His hands. The teaching of the earth will confirm and illustrate the teaching of the Bible, and both will fill the heart of the humble, reverent student with adoring views of God's power, wisdom and love.

9. *The vine and its branches*—S. John, xv. 5. The vine is one of the most extensively diffused of plants, and in this respect it furnishes a beautiful emblem of the universal spread of the Christian Church. A tree is now found to be not a single individual, but a body corporate. Now, viewed in this light, what a beautiful and appropriate type does this vine afford of the mystical body of Christ. This sacred vine will live forever. "Every branch in me (i.e., by an external alliance) that beareth not fruit (says The Vine) He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. I am the Vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing."

(To be Continued.)

THE SIOUX INDIANS.

Mr. Welsh described his meeting with the Rev. Mr. Walker, a Sioux Indian preacher, and the Rev. Mr. Burt. He contrasted the appearance of the former with the popular belief that the Indian is lazy, shiftless, and filthy. I found a man, says the speaker, who received me as a gentleman, who was dressed as a clergyman, and who showed every evidence of culture. In the evening we crossed the broad and rapid Missouri, and we were soon at the Reservation, where there are 1,500 Indians, and where the Church has a Mission. At the parsonage we were met by Mrs. Walker, a white woman, who received us with courtesy. During the evening we were called upon by the Chief of the Iron Nation. Looking out over the Mission in the morning I saw great fields of corn and oats of Indian cultivation.

Near the house were two women—the wives of a heathen Indian named Useful Heart. One of them was mourning for her daughter who had recently died. Before this Useful Heart was the meanest Indian on the prairie. His daughter was dying of consumption, and the father was so desperate that he sat with his revolver in his hand ready to take his own life as soon as his daughter should die. She said to him that if he did it they could never meet again in the other world, and so, influenced by this young girl, who had been converted, he threw his weapon aside. Her brother was a warrior and wore the scalp lock. She called him to her dying bedside, and said to him, "I want you to follow the new way, so go to Mr. Walker and give up your scalp lock." He did so. I now have in my possession that little lock of hair and it shows there is something in these people on which we can build.

How beautiful our lives would soon grow if we carried always with us, and put into practice, the lessons we learn by experience.

WHAT IS LIFE?

The mere lapse of years is not life. To eat and drink and sleep; to be exposed to darkness and the light; to pace around in the mill of habit, and turn the wheel of wealth; to make reason our book-keeper, and turn thought into an implement of trade—that is not life. In all this but a poor fraction of the consciousness of humanity is awakened, and the sanctities slumber which make it most worth while to be. Knowledge, truth, love, beauty, goodness, faith, alone can give vitality to the mechanism of existence; the laugh of mirth that vibrates through the heart, the tears that freshen the dry wastes within, the music that brings childhood back, the prayers that call the future near, the doubt which makes us meditate, the death which startles us with mystery, the hardship which forces us to struggle, the anxiety that ends in trust, are the true nourishment of our natural being.—Martineau.

Let no boy think he is to be made a gentleman by the clothes he wears, the horses he rides, the stick he carries, the dog that trots after him, the house he lives in, or the money he spends. No one or all of these things do it; and yet, every boy may be a gentleman. He may wear an old hat, cheap clothes, live in a poor house, and spend but little money. But how? By being true, manly and honorable, keeping himself neat and respectable, by being civil and courteous, by respecting himself and others, and finally, above all, by fearing God and keeping his commandments.

You may know and be able clearly to explain the whereabouts of the ark of the covenant, the pot of manna, the tables of stone and the wrecked fragments of Pharaoh's chariots. You may be able to speak eloquently and learnedly of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. May be up in the Jewish dispensation, and know, to an inch, the length of the High Priest's robes. May be able to explain creation, and even to draw a diagram of the Garden of Eden, but knowledge of these never will bring your pupils to Christ. Better evidence than all this is supplied by a knowledge of Christ in your own heart; by honesty of purpose, truthfulness of tongue, a pure and godly life.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS.

Questions for the use of Advanced Sunday School Classes, suggested by Sadler's Church Doctrine—Bible Truth.

HOLY COMMUNION.

88. What is the only expiatory sacrifice ever offered? Who the only Priest? What the only altar?

89. In reference to this Sacrifice, and in connection with it, which is the most sacrificial, any Jewish sacrifice or the Christian Eucharist? St. Matt. xxvi. 26-28.

90. Shew the similarity between the work of Christ in Heaven and that of His Priests on earth when celebrating the Holy Communion.

91. What is the difference between repeating and re-presenting Christ's Sacrifice?

92. Why is the act commanded by the words "Do this in remembrance of Me" not simply a reminder of Christ's Death nor a manifestation of the faith of the communicant?

93. Of what, then, is the Holy Eucharist a shewing forth or a memorial?

94. Shew from the Prayer Book that the Church regards this as the great act of worship for the Lord's Day.

95. In what part of the Eucharistic Service consists of sacrificial character?—All through, as appears from a consideration of any Jewish sacrifice in which Christ's Death was prefigured.

96. Explain Heb. xiii. 10, and shew the sacrificial character of the Christian Altar from Jer. xxxiii. 15-22; Mal. i. ii. iii. 3, 4; Isa. xix. 21; 1x. 9; St. Matt. v. 23; and especially from Rev. viii. 3-5.

97. Is this Sacrament a memorial before God or before the Church only?

98. If it be the former as well as the latter what follows as to its sacrificial character?