

HOW IS THIS?

Mr. Mill again is satisfied with the affirmation that the genius and moral qualities of Jesus are sufficient to account for all the effects which we have described. Here are his words and very remarkable ones they are as coming from him: "About the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality combined with profundity of insight, which, if we abandon the idle expectation of finding scientific precision, where something very different was aimed at, must place the Prophet of Nazareth even in the estimation of those who have no belief in His inspiration in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast. When this pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to that mission who ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life." But I submit, that it is not possible to go so far as this without, for the sake of logical consistency going much farther. For genius alone will not account for the effect which even Mr. Mill recognizes was produced on men by the life of Christ. No. Not even when it is allied with the qualities of a moral reformer and a martyr. Even if we admit that such genius as Jesus possessed is not itself the very thing to be accounted for, considering the surroundings of His youth and manhood, it remains a fact that the world has never been regenerated by genius, or moved to offer such homage to those who were dowered with it, as men pay to Jesus. Homer did not become a deity to the Greeks nor Virgil to the Romans. No name of genius is more honoured to-day in Germany than that of Goethe; but what a difference is there between the feelings of his admirers toward him and those cherished—I will not say merely by Christians, but by the world at large—toward Jesus! At the mention of the name of Robert Burns every Scotchman's "blood" (to use his own words regarding Wallace) "boils up in a spring-tide flood," but who thinks of him as a regenerator of society? Or who would organize a mission to carry his life-story to heathen nations? Probably the most cosmopolitan specimen of genius the world has ever seen was that of William Shakespeare; but who does not feel as wide a divergence between his writings, admirable as they are, and these four Gospels, as there is between the electric light and a star; between the finest specimens of the architect's handiwork and the magnificent cathedral rocks that rise sheer and high on the side of the Yosemite? for the one is human in its origin, and the other is the handiwork of God.

Nay, even when to the element of genius we add those of the moral reformer and the martyr, we are not perceptibly nearer giving any adequate explanation of the effects produced on humanity by the life of Christ than we were before. For we find genius, reforming energy, and martyrdom, all combined in the story of Socrates, which always, as I read it, seems to me to constitute the high water mark of mere unaided manhood. But what is Socrates to men to-day? What churches have been founded for his worship? What missionary associations have been instituted for the translation and diffusion of the "Phædo," the "Crito," and the "Apology?" And who among the children of men is moved to abstain from doing wrong or to persevere in doing right for the sake of the son of Sophroniscus? While, on the other hand, with a vast multitude of mankind, there is no motive so powerful as the "for my sake" from the lips of the Son of Mary. There is here, therefore, in the life of Christ, some quality that is not found in manhood, as such. What is that quality if it is not supernatural? What is it, if it is not divine? It is at least, all history being the witness, superhuman; and yet it has become so mighty on our race because the superhuman operated through One, who, whatever else He was, was also really a man. Here is a moral miracle which

renders credible the physical signs and wonders with which its manifestation to men was accomplished.—*Dr. W. M. Taylor.*

RECEIVING CHRIST.

Reception of any blessing is conditioned by the tender of it. It is so both with respect to the manner of securing it and the method of enjoying it. If something I desire is offered for sale, I can obtain it only by the payment of the price demanded for it. If offered for exchange, I can secure it only by furnishing that which is desire in exchange. If offered gratuitously, I secure it by merely accepting it. If the offer be absolutely free, the acceptance is such. If it be conditional, such also must the acceptance be. In all human intercourse reception of anything is conditioned by its tender. In no case can anything be legitimately secured otherwise than by compliance with the terms on which it is offered.

Neither can it in any case be otherwise legitimately enjoyed. If I have received of a physician a liquid to be used as a lotion, I may not use it as a potion. If I have received of him liquor for medicine, I may not use it as a beverage. If a person tenders me his services as a physician, I have no right to expect his services as a lawyer. If he tenders me his services as a teacher, I have no right to seek his services as a tailor.

In all the varied activities of life, individual men have their individual pursuits. They qualify themselves for their respective callings. They offer their services to their fellows in these respective callings. They claim proficiency, offer service in no other avocations. I have no right to expect of any a service he does not tender.

Upon these principles I act in all my intercourse with my fellow-men. If my horse needs to be shod I take him to the blacksmith. If my watch needs repairing I take it to the silversmith. If my health is failing I go to a physician. If I am threatened with litigation I go to a lawyer. If I seek an education for myself or my child I look up a teacher or a school. Having wants of any kind, I look up those who tender supply for such wants, and from them seek what I need. Where there are rival offers, I choose that one which on the whole promises the best supply at the least cost. Having chosen my supply, I yield myself to it as completely as the grounds of my confidence in it will permit.

In sickness I surrender myself to my physician—comply with his directions and take his prescriptions. In litigation I abide by the advice of my counsel and do as he directs. In education I defer to my teacher credit his statements and study the books of his selection.

The same principles essentially apply in the intercourse of a sinner with the Saviour. In this respect I have wants. I am a lost sinner and need salvation. It matters not how I have reached that knowledge, or come to that feeling. It is enough that I know I am lost and that I feel my need of a Saviour. I learn that there is such a Saviour as I need. Full account of Him is given in God's Word. I there learn His history—His character, His claims, and something of what He has done. I learn His conception of my case and how it is to be treated, His qualifications for the work and the conditions on which He will undertake it.

I there learn that my condition involves a three-fold danger. I am ignorant, guilty and depraved. I am ignorant of God, alienated from Him and disloyal to Him. My ignorance must be removed, my guilt must be expiated, and my character must be renewed. Christ tenders me His services to accomplish these results.

He offers Himself as the way, the truth and the life—the only one through whom I can have access to God. He offers Himself in a three-fold character corresponding to the three-fold work to be accomplished. He is Prophet, Priest and King. In this three-fold character He tenders His services gratuitously. He offers them without money and without price. He asks only that my trust in Him be absolute and my committal of myself to Him be without

reserve. All other efforts to secure salvation must be abandoned, all other rivals must be discarded. In Christ, and in Him alone, I must put my trust. His teaching is to be authoritative and final, His mediation perfect, His supremacy absolute.

When, convinced that Christ is worthy of such trust, I thus give myself to Him, I receive Him; but not till then. It is only thus that He offers Himself to me in the Gospel, and, as noticed above, in all cases reception must correspond to tender. Such surrender to Christ constitutes conversion—is possible only in genuine conversion. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul says, "I give you to understand . . . that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. xii. 3). It is easy enough otherwise to acknowledge that Jesus is a teacher, a priest, a king. But not otherwise can the acknowledgment come that He is the teacher, the priest, the king.

There is here a characteristic difference between Protestantism and Romanism. The former exalts Christ, the latter exalts the Church. The former quickens conscience, the latter benumbs it. The former sends the penitent to Christ, the latter directs him to the confessional. Rome relieves the burdened conscience of its load and assumes the responsibility of making peace with God. She relieves the Christian of the task of earnest study of God's Word and herself infallibly proclaims His truth. She relieves him from the necessity of knowing His law and herself furnishes the code for his life, with convenient compensations for transgressions of it.

But there is reason to fear the difference is sometimes more theoretical than practical—that even in Protestant Churches Protestant principles are disregarded. A person may be a real Christian and yet be a very imperfect one. His knowledge may be very limited, his character very defective. He may not receive as truth very much which you and I believe and which our Church professes. He may esteem many things to be lawful which you and I condemn, and which our Church forbids, and yet be a Christian. Does he bow to Christ? Does he accept Christ's revelation as the final test of truth, His righteousness as the only ground of acceptance with God, His will as the supreme rule of conduct? Then is he a Christian, and as such I must receive him. Then it is mine to persuade him that the doctrines I believe are those which Christ teaches, the laws I obey and maintain are those which Christ has enacted. Convincing him of this I have a right to ask his acceptance of my teaching, obedience to my law. "Be ye followers of me even as I also am of Christ." But I have no right otherwise. I am not lord of God's heritage, but only an example to the flock.—*Rev. D. F. Bonner.*

WORK VS. POVERTY.

In a Prussian roadside inn one hot summer's day several men were smoking and drinking. The room was dirty and uncared for, and the men, who looked quite in keeping with it, were railing at the way in which Providence did her work, and contrasting the luxury and idleness of the rich with the misery and hardships of the poor.

During the conversation a stranger, a young man, came in to eat his bread and cheese while his team rested in the shade before the inn. For a time he listened silently to the talk, and then joined in saying, "You must strike!"

"Strike against what?" asked the peasants.

"Against poverty!" answered the young man, "and the weapon with which to strike is work."

"Well said! Sensibly spoken!" laughed the peasants.

"It would have been well for me had I always been as sensible," continued the stranger, "but I used to be an idle rogue. I was strong and healthy, but I would not work, and if now and then I was obliged to do anything, I was off at once to the alehouse, and like lightning the money was out and the brandy was in. I went from place to place—that means, that everywhere I was turned away, for no master wants a loafer about. I'd soon had enough of farm service, and then I went about to fairs and public houses as a fiddler. Wherever anyone would hear me, I scraped my violin,