

facts, not what might, but what does occur. Into the lives of the lower creatures caprice assuredly seems to enter; the treatment of a fly by a child is capricious, and may be regarded as puzzling to the fly. As we rise in the scale of existence we hope that things get better we have experience that they do. It may be said that up to a point in the scale of life vice and caprice increase; that the lower organisms and the plant world know nothing of them, and that man has been most wicked of all; but they reach a maximum at a certain stage—a stage the best of the human race have already passed, and we need not postulate either vice or caprice in our far superiors. Men have thought themselves the sport of the gods before now, but let us hope they were mistaken. Such thoughts would lead to madness and despair. We do not know the laws which govern the interaction of different orders of intelligence, nor do we know how much may depend on our attitude and conduct. It may be that prayer is an instrument which can control or influence higher agencies, and by its neglect we may be losing the use of a mighty engine to help on our lives and those of others.

The universe is huge and awful; every day we might so easily be crushed by it. We need the help of every agency available, and if we had no helpers we should stand a poor chance. The loneliness of it when we leave the planet would be appalling: sometimes even here the loneliness is great.

What the "protecting atmosphere" for our disembodied souls may be, I know not. Some may liken the protection to the care of a man for a dog, of a woman for a child, of a far seeing minister for a race of bewildered slaves; while others may dash aside the contemplation of all intermediaries and agencies, and feel themselves safe and enfolded in the protecting love of God Himself.

The region of Religion and the region of a completer science are one.

For DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN.

Historical Criticism, X *

Genesis xii, xiii.

Hitherto we have been studying a brief sketch of the primeval history of all nations, a prelude, as it were, to the writer's main theme. Now, still under the guidance of the Jehovist, we take up the single thread of the history of the chosen race.

We have said that this writer lived in the ninth century, B. C., and have spoken of his re-writing the early history of his people in the light of later events. Every history is coloured to a greater or less extent by the special genius of the writer and by the general temper of his age. But we cannot agree with those who say that in these chapters the Jehovist is recording religious experiences possible in his own time, but impossible in Abraham's. That is going too far. The answer to that is, that you cannot account for the spiritual ideals of the Jehovist except by previous experiences, the same in kind though perhaps less in degree. You cannot explain the history of the Jews without great personalities like Abraham. For this reason we feel certain that Abraham was a real historical person, and

*Notes of the tenth of a series of sermons by Rev. G. M. Milligan, D.D., of Old St. Andrew's Church, Toronto.

that his character was not an ideal creation of a later time.

The life story of Abraham is told in chapters xii—xxv: 7. To-night we wish to speak of some of its greater features before we examine it in detail.

(1) God enters into a covenant with Abraham. This means that he enters into special and intense relations for the accomplishment of a certain purpose. That purpose was to give to the world at large through the Jews true religious conceptions, and the first step towards this end was to make specific disclosures to Abraham. It is important to notice that the promise is repeated seven or eight times, to impress the lesson that religion is not a matter of evolution but of Divine impartation, that it begins in grace, and ends in works.

(2) Abraham receives the promise with childlike trustfulness. He makes a worthy response to divine disclosures, and that is faith. The work of Abraham was to begin a redemptive dispensation for the children of men. God does not work in history in any haphazard way but according to definite laws, which in their collective aspect we call the philosophy of history. One of these laws is that development must proceed along special lines before universality can be attained. This is true of the nation as it is of the individual. We do not expect a boy to be cosmopolitan. He begins by leaving his father, mother, brothers and sisters, his home, his school, then his city, his province, his own country and last of all he grows up into the idea of the brotherhood of man. So God took one branch of the human race, and one family of that branch to place His name in them, that through them the whole race might get certain conceptions which would liberate and purify their lives. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son."

(3) Abraham was a man of genius, one of the great men of the world's history. He had the spirit of all great pioneers, a confidence in a power higher than himself, an ability to walk by faith not by sight. "He went out not knowing whither he went" but he believed in the omnipotence of God (cp ch xvii: 1.) and this regenerated his life. He could be calm and free on any shore for God was there. And his faith was severely tested. For the fulfilment of the promise two things of an external kind were necessary, first, a land, and second, a people. But neither of these was realized in his day; yet he never wavered because he was fully persuaded that God was the ruler of all things. He had revealed Himself as God Almighty. Because Abraham's life was dominated by a sublime motive, he was able to relate himself properly to material things. They were never made the chief end of his life. He was not in a hurry to become rich and powerful, or to enter into complete possession of the Promised Land. He could bide God's time and was content to let Lot take his choice of territory.

May such a faith be ours, a trust in an all-wise Providence, that shall dethrone the winter of despair and bring the spring time of hope and joy into our lives so that they shall be "like the light of dawn that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

An open fire on a winter's evening and a cheerful heart are alike.

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Thousands of mothers in all parts of Canada have written to say that Baby's Own Tablets are the best medicine they have ever used for the cure of the little ills that afflict all children. It is impossible to publish all these letters, for they would more than fill a newspaper, but the following extracts are a fair sample of what all mothers say about this medicine:

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According to the Glasgow Weekly Leader, King Edward and Queen Alexandra are giving grave offence to many of their loyal subjects by their attitude on Sabbath observance. Reporting on Sabbath observance to Kintyre United Free Presbytery in Campbeltown, the Rev. John Stuart, Killearn, "deplored the action of King Edward and Queen Alexandra in visiting the New Gallery and inspecting the portraits of British monarchs, and also attending a concert in Queen's Hall on Sunday. The action of royalty in giving patronage to Sunday amusements could not but be far reaching and injurious to Sabbath observance. Such action in high places must mean a lamentable increase in the difficulties with which the Church will have to cope in this land to get a fair hearing for the Gospel." Everywhere, it seems, the fight is being forced by the secularisers of the Sabbath. Christian people will have to close up their ranks and present a united front to this incoming flood of national and moral retrogression.

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