

type from their successors. They had, for instance, very extensive dioceses. Paul's diocese must have contained the provinces from Galatia to Italy inclusive; for on the hypothesis in question we cannot suppose that he would have sent Epistles to Churches that were under the rule of another Apostle-Bishop.

Peter, in like manner, had a diocese that extended over the greater part of Asia Minor, but it either coincided in part with St. Paul's, for he too addresses the Churches in Galatia and Asia, or he was intruding into his brother Bishop's territory. It may be alleged that St. Peter, as the Apostle of the Circumcision, had Episcopal charge of all the Jewish Christians, and that therefore he was guilty of no interference with the duties and prerogatives of Paul. But in that case what are we to think of St. James, who is said to have been the Bishop of Jerusalem, and who yet addresses his Epistle "to the Twelve Tribes scattered abroad," meaning, of course, the Christian Jews throughout the world? This seems an intrusion into Peter's diocese. And so we may say of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, unless he was St. Peter himself, which no one supposes.

#### THE APOSTLES.

These things are mentioned to show that the Apostles did not occupy a position at all resembling that of modern Bishops. Mr. Booth says: "We do not quarrel about names, we are concerned with things." But the names are different we cannot help thinking because the things are different. The early Bishops did not call themselves Apostles because they were not Apostles, nor successors of the Apostles. This high claim was not put forward till the time of Cyprian, when both doctrine and ritual had deviated very far from the primitive simplicity. The fact is that the office of the Apostles was special and temporary, like that of Moses and that of the Prophets. They were not chosen by men, but by the Lord Himself. They were sent to preach the Gospel throughout the world, to lay the foundations of the Church, and to give it its laws and its constitution. They were appointed to be eye-witnesses of Christ as risen from the dead. They had power to work miracles, and to impart spiritual gifts. They were inspired by the Holy Ghost to declare infallibly the truth of God; and without all of these qualifications no man could be an Apostle. (Acts i. 22-24; viii. 17; ix. 6; Cor. ix. 1; 2 Cor. xii. 12; John xvi. 13-14; Eph. ii. 20.) They did their work; they passed away; and their gifts and their peculiar duties passed away with them. They needed no successors, and if they had any, history has failed to record them.

#### FORCES WORKING TOWARDS A TRUER AND RICHER THEOLOGY.

Another force working in this direction is that which was just named in a former paper—the now generally-received doctrine pertaining to the immanence of God (God in nature in man—not outside or *extra-mundane*). Proceeding on this principle of exposition we may expect to stumble on truths hitherto but partially noticed, if not altogether unrecognized. See how this principle will tell upon the relation of God to the world to man. If this principle be true, then He is no longer a dim and distant Deity, sitting on a solitary throne far away from the homes of men, a stranger to their sympathies and an avenger of their sins. On the contrary He is very near to us, *not very far from any one of us*. The great and good Spirit that is leading the Church into all truth—that is in every movement in nature and in every holy aspiration in man's heart—is with us always, holding communion with all true hearts as the ocean is in communion with all the streams of the world. This is what is called the immanence of God—is God dwelling in and flowing through all nature, mental and material. Formerly it was the custom to think of God as being outside the world, and of His rule as being one of His reigning in some far-away region—far away from this world and all that concerns humanity. This idea—the *extra-mundane* idea—prevailed, notably in the Western Church, till within a century ago. You find it in the writings of Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustine, even in Calvin; but by-and-bye a protest was raised against this representation; and strangely enough it came not through the high priests of the faith, but the high priests of literature. "I can no longer be satisfied with the orthodox conception of a God outside of the world," was the utterance of Lessing in his day; similar were the utterances of Hegel, Goethe, Coleridge

and our own Wordsworth, whose lines on this point are striking:

—And I have felt  
A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky; and in the mind of man  
A motion and a Spirit that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of our thoughts,  
And rolls through all things.

Hear now the utterances of the Master: I am the True Vine and My Father is the Husbandman . . . He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit . . . If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you. . . . He that hath My Commandments, he it is that loveth Me and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I shall love him, and shall manifest Myself to him.

This brings God very near, makes our communion with Him direct—not through means alone, but independent of means, but all the stronger and safer *with the means, the Word, the symbols and Sacraments*. Without these we might become mystics. This is a great advance on the old Theology; and the fruit that it bears is the richest we know. It has lifted the curse from nature and given a new meaning to all its movements, to every flower that blooms and star that shines. It has lent a sanctity to man and awakened a deep interest in all that concerns him in his passage through the world. Who does not see this interest breaking out in many forms in missions for the heathen, efforts to extinguish slavery, remove intemperance, lift up the poor, etc. The fact that the Church is Christ's body—that He is still incarnated in humanity—dwelling in His people and they in Him, and that they are beginning to realize this—His nearness—His immanence—cannot but work great changes in the world, and no wonder, for, as Professor Allen, of Cambridge, says: "When the doctrine of the Incarnation is received in its fulness, and God and humanity are seen in its light to be joined by an indissoluble tie

when God is conceived as present, actively engaged in the redemptive forces of human life, not merely superintending them from a distance—then does the world become sacred, because the abode of indwelling Deity, and all days become holy." Plainly the purpose of God is that all time is yet to be consecrated to one grand end—that all business, politics and pursuits are yet to be purified—and that all men are yet to be brought into His Church. What we do see in these respects sacred days righteousness worked out amid the high places of stormy temptation and men living a divine life even where Satan's seat is—are only earnest of what the Holy Spirit holds in reserve for the world. The Church may imply an elect few, but only in order that through them all may come to a saving knowledge of the truth. The Church's calling becomes complete when we all come to the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Proceeding on this principle of exposition there is hardly a doctrine that will not be illuminated—a difficulty that will not be smoothed. Take, e.g., the doctrine of election, that has just been named, and keeping in view Christ as a centre working in nature and through nature; keeping in view the fact that the Church is His body—His temple—that the great fact of His Incarnation is continuous—and that God is in Christ reconciling the world to Himself; keeping in view His reign, His great merits and the far-reaching effects of His Death, we may be led to conclude that the last word has not yet been spoken on that subject. Election is popularly understood to be God's sovereign selection of certain persons to enjoy the benefits of redemption—to the exclusion of all others. "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified and saved but the elect only; the rest of mankind . . . God has been pleased to ordain to dishonour and wrath for their sins to the praise of His glorious justice" (Confession iii. 6, 7).

But following in the line indicated we come upon traces that would lead us to a larger interpretation, to the hope that the elect are chosen not to a monopoly of privilege but rather to a position of leadership—leadership in a great army. May they not be the inner circle of the great white-robed throng—the fruit and flower of the redeemed? Israel was a chosen nation. The generation of the apostles' day was a

chosen generation—chosen to lead the van. The disciples that waited on our Lord's ministry, and all the noble army of the martyrs that followed in their train, were called and chosen—called and chosen to be lights in the world—founders of Churches—pioneers in Christ's service—light bearers in the darkness like David Livingstone in Africa, or Patrick Hamilton in Scotland, lifting up his voice while the slow fire of green wood was consuming his limbs, and saying: *Oh Lord, how long will gross darkness cover the people?* Such were the first fruits of a great harvest. First fruits, indeed, is the very figure the Apostle Paul uses in speaking of this doctrine, Rom. xi. 1: *If the first fruits be holy the lump will be holy*. The first fruits were elected to a place of honour and they were accepted by the priest on the day of consecration. They were holy, but so also with all the sheaves that were to ripen on the thousand harvest fields throughout the land. So with those distinguished saints that were called a high service in the apostles' day. The first fruits of Achaia—the first fruits of Hawaii, Madagascar, Formosa, Blantyre—may be spoken of in the same way. They are God's elect ones whom He has called from darkness to light who are to be to the praise of His Grace in the ages that are to come. Again, the elect are described as the root while those that follow are the branches. The one figure—*first fruits*

gives to the elect a representative character; the other the root—makes them the founders of our Churches—the springs of light and life that continue to bless the world long after they have passed away to that higher circle of renown reserved for distinguished servants. In short, this doctrine of election at which so many stumble, and around which our standards have drawn the sharp lines of a hard and unrelenting dogmatism, both in the way of selection and reprobation, is not to be regarded as having assumed its final form. This is certainly the contention of such writers as Bruce, of Glasgow, N. Smith, of New Haven, Conn., and Fairbairn who (Fairbairn) has earned the right to speak on this point. Proceeding in the same line, and working from the same centre—in that ampler and clearer light which we get in this way—God's Church will be guided into the full orb of truth, into something like a truer and fuller interpretation of those texts and truths bearing on this great question. Dr. Fairbairn in his "City of God" strikes the true note here when he says: "What we need is a system (of Theology) as constructive, comprehensive and sublime as Calvinism, but more generous—an interpretation of the universe through our higher idea of God. Men cannot live in these days by a faith which touches them only at a few points. They need a faith that embraces and penetrates their spirits—a faith that will bring perfect peace and enable them to feel in harmony with ultimate and universal truth." Christ in His work, wide as humanity—Christ in His everlasting reign, including even the region of Hades, of which He holds the key, is the sum and substance of the Word—the root of a redeemed race—the interpretation of the Father; and all those eternal decrees and dark mysteries over which so many anxious students ponder are to be read in this light. This is not altogether a new principle of interpretation, but it is a principle that is now being better understood than in former days. It is a principle that is full of promise and one that is making its way through the Church, though not into the formulated creed of the Church. The result is that the great ideas of God and Redemption are held up in the pulpit in a purer light, and they are beginning to tell upon the sermons, the prayers, the hymns, the literature of the Church, and before long they will work down into the doctrinal statements of the Church and give to them their appropriate colour and complexion. ONWARD AND UPWARD.

#### THE NORTH-WEST.

MR. EDITOR,—The letter from Mr. Grey on the above subject in a recent issue does not do justice to the Presbyterians in that Province. I happen to be personally acquainted with a large number there, and I am of the opinion that he only speaks for himself individually, and his remarks regarding a prominent Presbyterian minister call for a reply. To one unacquainted with the past history of Canada, Mr. Grey's remarks are certainly misleading. He asserts that: "Laying the guilt of this unnatural rebellion at the door of the Roman Catholic Church is in our belief to be without evidence or any foundation."