

life work. A notable instance is the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. His general character and his conduct, before and after conversion, all so well known to us, forbid any other explanation of it than that which he himself gives, that it was the good pleasure of God to reveal His Son in him.

Moreover, a further outward result of that inward power is visible in the growth and propagation of the Christian religion. It is not to be forgotten that other systems of religion have been widely diffused. But human reasons can be given for their extension, while the secondary causes by which it has been sought to account for the propagation of Christianity are partly effects, themselves needing explanation, and partly causes whose effectiveness involves the supposition that divine power is connected with them. The inward power of Christianity has revealed itself in continual progress in all those whose zeal shrinks not from the most arduous labours and severest sufferings, in nations brought under its sway, in widespread missionary enterprise, and in witnesses of its efficacy raised up throughout the whole world.

Connected with the life of Christ is noticeable, also, the exercise of supernatural intelligence essentially higher than had been manifested in outward nature and in man. This is displayed in the utterances ascribed to Jesus. Whatever doubt the unbeliever may try to throw on the reference of these to Christ, he cannot deny that the utterances have been made. Their nature evidences that they are the expression of One, whose thoughts are not as the thoughts of men. The unparalleled claim put forth by Messiah when He said "I am the Light of the world," is justified by His teaching. This utterly transcends the limits of His birth and surroundings. It furnishes the solution to problems whose importance had long been recognized, but which had baffled the acutest intellects. In Him appeared intimate knowledge of the Highest. In Him were disclosed, with a clearness unknown before, the nature, the duty, and the destiny of man. The substance, as well as the manner, of His teaching bears out the words of the officers sent to seize Him. Never man so spake. The same may be said in a degree of those who professedly declared the mind of God, either preparatory to or in continuance of the teaching of Christ. The words of the prophets in the Old Testament and the apostles in the New have a character of their own. They are unique in literature. They give evidence of an insight, a knowledge not to be accounted for by the natural faculties of these men, nor by the circumstances and surroundings of their times. This manifestation of supernatural intelligence is rather to be discerned through the impression their utterances are fitted to make on a susceptible mind, than a matter to be formally expressed. In one case, however, the supernatural intelligence may be set forth evidentially, that is, where the utterances have reference to future events, neither foreseen by ordinary human sagacity, nor brought about by human contrivance as a result of the prediction. Prophecy is not more real when it refers to the future than when it deals with the present or the past, but the divine intelligence embodied in it is more readily set forth. Neither the prediction nor the event which realizes its ideal, if considered alone, may appear supernatural, but in the correspondence between the two divine intelligence emerges. Since prophecy connects itself with the self-manifestation of God in grace, for the redemption of mankind and the establishment of a kingdom on earth, its sphere will naturally be the kingdom. Accordingly its predictive element should be sought in large forecasts as to the character, growth and other features of the kingdom. No demand can justly be made beforehand as to the degree to which it must specify minute particulars. No alleged failure to foreshadow details, or alleged unpredictable character of portions usually regarded as foreshadowing such details, can be urged if in general features indisputable predictions appear. Christ's own utterances, particularly in many parables, exhibit an insight into the future of the kingdom, which could result from no merely human discernment, but whose accuracy is increasingly displayed by the progress of time. The relation of the Old Testament to the New gives a favourable opportunity for examining prophecy. The most destructive criticism acknowledges that the latest part of the Old Testament was written at least 150 B.C. While Christianity sprang out of the religion recorded in the Old Testament, it is not a development explicable by reference to the unassisted religious instinct. The thought of the Christian religion lay as something new in the minds of the prophets. Their utterances are burdened with it. Though they lived separate from other nations and jealously guarded their isolation, their vision is of a universal kingdom, a religion embracing all nations, ultimately filling the earth with righteousness and peace. Its spiritual character was clearly discerned by them. They express unwavering confidence in the final triumph of good. Their vision connects itself with the advent of One who is God's anointed. Starting from the circumstances of their own time they trace out the lines to the last days, when the glorious, conquering Messiah appears. Yet, on the other hand, the vision is mingled with suffering, humiliation and rejection. The ideal grows with the successive prophets, each labouring to clarify the Messianic forecast, each adding a fragment to the mass, yet not seeking to harmonize the different features in one view. These broad forecasts and general outlines characterize the entire structure of Old Testament activity. While general they are intelligible and definite. The life and mission of Christ adequately realized them. Moreover, their fulfilment, while real, was so original and spiritual that it could not have been evolved by human minds from these outlines. Thus prophecy as an integral part of God's redemptive revelation of Himself is a manifestation of supernatural intelligence.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer also furnishes an instance of supernatural intelligence. In connection with the divine work in regeneration, the believer can testify that unto him God revealed, through the Spirit, things which he saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man. Here, again, the testimony is one which cannot be communicated to the doubter. It is the man that willeth to do God's will, who possesses the requisite discernment. But the testimony of such is credible, and has a right to be received.

Connected with the life of Christ is noticeable also a manifestation of supernatural wisdom, essentially superior to that revealed in outward nature and in man. This is discernible in the very nature and fabric of redemption, and in the preparation for it in preceding ages. The successive periods, and different factors in the history of Israel, as recorded in the Old Testament, are not only prophetic of the New, but

are so co-ordinated and adjusted as to work towards it. This speaks of wisdom, but a wisdom which certainly did not inhere in the agents themselves, but in Him, who sees the end from the beginning. His Spirit so wrought in and controlled the human authors of the Old Testament, that though they were separated from one another by centuries, and by the utmost diversity of natural endowment, their writings, viewed from the Christian standpoint, are seen to coalesce in an organic structure, not more wondrous in its internal harmony, than in its preparation for the fullness of time in Christ.

The work of redemption wrought out in the fullness of time discloses yet more of divine wisdom, in its adaptation to the needs, longings and aspirations of human nature. Man's failure to attain the proper ideal of his nature finds expression in unrest and vague longings, which have been aptly called the hunger of the soul. Scripture shows its adaptation by the recognition and interpretation of these needs. It not only knows that there is such unrest and strife, but confronts man with the unknown object of his longings. It declares that his nature craves communion with the Most High, and, in order to obtain that, needs pardon for the guilty record of the life, and deliverance from the moral weakness felt in seeking to break with evil. Though the real source and character of this unrest were previously hidden from him who experiences it, yet when confronted with what is thus mirrored in Scripture, he is compelled to recognize the truthfulness of the likeness. But Scripture also discloses such correspondence to these deep facts of human existence, as meets and satisfies them. In faithfully depicting the many needs of the human soul, it not only holds up the ideal perfection of man, but discloses the mode of regaining it. It reveals God in Christ, taking that nature which had fallen into the closest possible union with divine excellence, coming in the experience of an earthly life in continual contact with iniquity, in all its virulence and vileness, vindicating the majesty of law, and declaring the guilt of sin, by a most awful expiation, and dwelling in the heart as the inward light, and strength, and hope of humanity. In that is made known an adaptation accurate and thorough to the needs and possibilities of man.

This adaptation extends to mankind universally. The power of the Gospel to satisfy the deepest needs of the soul is not restricted to one age or to one race. It is not affected by social conditions. It is not limited by intellectual or moral attainments. The progress of Christian missions is increasingly making manifest that the Gospel has a message and a remedy, to which humanity everywhere responds. Even those who do not accept Christianity as divine are constrained to acknowledge this. One of them (Mr. Lecky) thus writes: "It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character, which through all the changes of eighteen centuries has filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love, and has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments and conditions; has not only been the highest pattern of virtue, but the highest incentive to its practice, and has exerted so deep an influence, that it may be truly said, that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and than all the exhortations of moralists."

Moreover, a comparative study of religions reveals the fact that Christianity alone meets the needs of universal humanity. Other systems contain elements of truth and traces of moral worth. As might be expected, they give voice to the deep needs and cravings of the human soul. The very existence of a religion, no matter how perverted its beliefs and morality, is an expression of want. But for the most part these religions do not aspire to anything wider than national limits. Nor, whether national or universal, do they contain a remedy adapted to human needs. One of the most highly extolled among them, while recognizing the unsatisfying character of life as it is, can hold out no hope higher than the ultimate extinction of needs with the extinction of personal existence itself. The divine Being which they set forth is essentially an unknown God, not one who can satisfy the intellectual, moral and religious cravings of humanity. Thus the Christian religion has a unique character, in being so adapted to man that it aids him to realize his true destiny. In this it gives evidence of supernatural wisdom.

Connected with the life and mission of Christ is noticeable also a manifestation of righteousness and morality generally, essentially higher than that disclosed by the light of reason. The morality expressed and enforced in Scripture reveals its excellence in many features. It traces holiness back to its true principle, when it inculcates conformity to the divine nature and will. God is set forth, perfect in His nature, sovereign in His will. Everything is subordinated to Him. His glory is continually declared the chief end of all things. His nature is the embodiment of righteousness, hence mankind in their actions are to have respect always unto Him. Thus the rules of morality become reflections of the divine character. Besides, they comprise a complete system, embracing the services due from man to God, to his fellow-creatures, and to himself, and seeking the development of those elements in the disposition by which nature is ennobled. While exhibiting a preference for a gentle and humble disposition over the more prominent traits of character which the world admires, Scripture extols that true manliness and moral heroism which is the outcome of a Christian spirit. It is not justly chargeable with neglecting the duties either of private friendship or of public interest. Difficulties may be felt in connection with some actions and utterances recorded in Scripture, particularly in earlier portions. These are largely obviated by bearing in mind that what occurs by divine permission has not necessarily divine approval, and by recognizing that there is progress in the clearness and fullness of revelation. Moreover, while outward duties are fully recognized, leading importance is attached to the diligent keeping of the heart, and the discipline of the inward man. Further, in setting forth the moral and spiritual ruin attendant on unrighteousness, and the inspiring hopes connected with the realization of holiness, the Scripture reveals sanctions and motives for the practice of morality worthy of itself.

The disclosures of righteousness are also embodied in a perfect example of holiness in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the impression made by His life upon those with whom He came in contact. Friends, opponents and indifferent persons unite in testifying that He is a righteous man, who has done nothing amiss. The fourfold record represents Him in the various experiences of life, narrates

His words, and describes His works; throughout all He is the sinless One. The incidents that disclose His perfect moral harmony show Him in the full exercise of His whole nature. Even the portrayal in a life of such perfection had been unknown previously in the world. It is true not even the most intimate could discern the inmost thoughts of his heart. Their judgment necessarily was based on the outward life. But the inward testimony also is supplied by utterances of Jesus. He had no consciousness of sin. Such an outwardly pure moral character could never have co-existed with a conscience ignorant of inward sinfulness, had the latter really existed. This entire freedom from all self-accusation can be explained only by a perfect righteousness such as the world had never known before. In this connection the elevating and purifying influences which Christianity has exerted where it prevails may also be referred to. These manifest the continual agency of the spirit of holiness, whose presence is virtually the presence of Christ.

Coming to the divine goodness, it is superfluous to say that in connection with the life and mission of Christ there is a higher manifestation of this, for the revelation of God in Christ is essentially a revelation of goodness under the forms of mercy and grace. In response to the misery and sinfulness of man's actual condition, prominence is given to these features of the divine character all through the Scripture. The law contemplated God in covenant with man, and that a covenant of grace. The great prophets no more truly preached righteousness than they proclaimed the unchanging mercy of God, a mercy so quickening that, despite all unworthiness of His people, it would yet work out its end. In the perfect human character of Jesus, revealing the ideal of manhood, and in His deep sympathy, reaching out to the degraded and depraved, and winning them to Himself, are made known the gracious design for which man was made, and the divine pity which was called forth by his failure to fulfil that design. But only as the thought rises up to the real divine nature of Christ is the fullness of this gracious manifestation understood. In beholding Him who is One with the Supreme God, yielding up His life upon the cross through the promptings of His own love, we behold the divine goodness expressed in a form than which the mind cannot conceive of a higher. Even the dark mystery of moral evil, though still impenetrable, yet has such light cast upon it as reveals that no attribute of God is imperilled or obscured thereby. In confronting evil and putting it down, in working out a divinely sufficient remedy, in repelling all its defilement and in becoming the pledge of exceeding great and precious promises, Christ is manifested in redemption the power and the wisdom and the righteousness and the grace of God. The fullness of all preceding revelation condenses in Him. The excellencies of the Divine Being shine forth from Him in such manner that all the other attributes, themselves more fully disclosed as they blend in the manifestation of redeeming grace, with one voice declare—God is love.

The claims of Theism and Christianity are vindicated in this ever-increasing disclosure given of the being and character of God in outward nature, in man and in the historical revelation which centres in Christ. The complete disclosure is not yet. These are but the earnest of a fuller evolution, when the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He shall dwell among them, so that His children shall see Him even as He is. All the parts of creation still wear, as at the first, a forward look, waiting for that self-manifestation whose glories shall be reproduced in all the children of God. That assured hope justifies the fullest confidence in the issue, in defending Christianity against every rival system. Its own intrinsic character is its true vindication. The defender of the faith has to hold forth the word of life, and clearly shining in its proper light it will dispel all darkness.

THE KENT BRIDGE MISSION.

MR. EDITOR,—It may be interesting to your readers and useful to the Church to know something of the mission work done at Kent Bridge. This place situate on the banks of the Thames is about five miles south-west of Thamesville and nine or ten north-east of Chatham. It is the centre of a large rural population, and in a fine agricultural district, but very destitute of the ordinances of religion. Universalists and Swedenborgians have their devotees, and no less than two taverns are in an apparently flourishing condition. There is not a church edifice within several miles, although a small Forester's hall in a very dilapidated condition is utilized as a place of worship.

Several years ago there was a Methodist Episcopal church but somehow or other the congregation dwindled away and the building also fell to pieces. In 1887 the Methodist minister having discontinued his appointments, the Rev. J. Becket, of Thamesville, at the request of a lady member of his own congregation who lived at the Bridge, preached on a week evening once a fortnight during the greater part of the summer to an audience ranging from thirty to sixty persons.

By invitation of the Chatham Presbytery the Students' Missionary Society of Knox College opened up in 1888 a preaching station here in connection with Wabash and Grove Mills. Mr. Cooper was the pioneer missionary and he organized and superintended Sabbath school before divine service. He was succeeded by Mr. J. A. Davidson in 1889, who faithfully and successfully carried on the good work. Mr. Muldrew was the labourer during the summer of 1890 and after a faithful and successful season of hard work has quite recently left to resume his studies at Toronto. The labours of these young men have been duly appreciated by the Presbyterians and others; their meetings were well attended and valuable assistance given in the Sabbath school. Unfortunately the school is closed and the meetings cease when the student leaves as the Presbytery has no man to take his place.

Meanwhile the C. P. R. has a station here with daily train service each way. Town lots have been laid out and some sold, thus forming the nucleus of a village. The Methodists have now a service every Sabbath and although their attendance is small they are moving in the matter of building a church.

Is it not one of the saddest features of our Home Mission work that a needy and promising field as this is has to be left uncultivated six or eight months of the year?

ONLOOKER.

Kent County, Oct. 8, 1890.