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IMMORTALITY.

A PROOF FOR ALL MEN, DRAWN FROM SCIENCE.

SOME one stated, "The light of nature affords not a single argument for a future state beyond this, the only one, 'It is possible for God, or for nature, seeing that we are made, to re-make us ; and this we humbly hope.'"

Did men accept the assertion, every one might say, "It is being half dead to know that all shall die." Physical science, generally and unwarrantably used to show that the pathway of life leads no whither, is incompetent to furnish demonstrative evidence. Rather the contrary, for if we follow with an upward mind the wonders that come to us, accurate science shows, through all the secular, there was a life behind ; and not less evermore, as we trace the future, things go from change to change, and the flowers on every grave are token of dawn beyond the tomb. Ancient Zophar spoke reasonably, "Thine age shall be clearer than the noon day ; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning ; and thou shalt be secure, because there is hope ; yea, thou shalt dig about thee, thou shalt take thy rest in safety."

We undertake to show that, instead of nature not affording a single argument for immortality, nature is full of argu-

ments ; so full that, to the sound mind, they are proof "man shall live for evermore." The process of thought and investigation shall be from things high to higher.

ALL THINGS TEND TO THE FUTURE.

The result of research demonstrates that every natural process is preparatory to another ; that progress, not periodicity, is the chief feature of natural order. Past states were for the present, the present prepares for the future. The worlds, their conditions, their adaptations, are made for other conditions which they are entering every moment. No impassible line is drawn anywhere. The fact is like a truer light in light. Any professor of science not aware of this is no professor ; nor should he be reasoned with who affects denial. Instead of nature not affording a single argument for a future state, there is not one thing in the whole world which can be cut off from the future ; the generations are knit each with each.

History, science, philosophy, our Christian religion, show that the worlds and the things in them have not done all that they will do ; everything is in the state of becoming something else. Nothing is done merely to be undone. The truth is universal—a star's travelling light, though seen but for a moment, is not less lasting than the star.

We find a threefold manner of continuity ; transfer from grade to grade prevalent in the earth ; transfer to states and worlds with which we are now connected ; transfer to places and conditions from which we now seem greatly separated. These transfers, every one, are taking place this very moment—each and all for others' good.

We make no leap in the dark as to this. We are learning to anticipate and control the future. We change the forms of matter by differentiations of force in order to obtain particular behaviour and future uses. We alter the conditions of life in many organisms for the sake of special advantages. We find, by mathematical science, that all the radiant orbs will enter other parts of space in the future, in fact are doing so now, and will be differently related one to another. The

astronomer causes the dark unseen future path of a star to shine in his knowledge as a thread of light. Everything, even the least in nature, passes on to further use; and our mental faculties, well holden together, advance age after age from rudimentary to higher degree, ever reaping something new, and all the new but earnest of wonders that are to be.

The immensity of the world in all its substances and forces and times so enters our own life that commonest experiences become very great, and are an endless feast in their meaning. The differences and distinctions that make each seem a separate whole are traced to some grand Power who is moving everything forward; and there is no omission, no weakness, no error anywhere—nothing that errs from law, allowance is made for all. The Eternal Power infuses the universe with larger meaning than is at present accomplished. Natural tendencies are so converging, and science so enlarges our comprehension, that we know of a wonderfulness, a vastness, an increasing purpose running through the ages surpassing all that our mind can think, all that our spirit can imagine, all that our heart can desire. The worlds' problem is not less beneficent than splendid.

NOTHING IS LOST.

Cicero said, "Cultivation is as necessary to the mind as food to the body." Owing to this cultivation, that persuasion of immortality which, amongst uncultured nations and individuals was and is a sort of intuition, enters the range of verifiable and verified subjects.

As intuition, it gave origin to fairy tales, myths of the gods, conceptions of spirits good and evil; of felicities, mysteries, solemnities yet to come. Every superstition, whatever we may think of it, had birth in brains that sought the heaven while their feet trod the earth. These tales and visions were not freaks of fancy, but shadows of things feared or hoped by men; more than shadows, realities expressed in thoughts that shake mankind; the ancient founts of these inspirations still well through all our fancy. The primitive wonder grew into the strong high-class

imagination that sparkles in the classics, and seems to have physical reflection or counterpart in the heavens.

We think of it in this way. The Straits of Sicily and some other parts afford beautiful sights. In the heat of summer, after the sea and air have been disturbed by the winds, a calm succeeds. Then, at dawn, aërial forms appear, some at rest, some moving very quickly. Palaces, woods, gardens, fountains, men are there, and towns ; brighter, more beautiful, quicker in reality of existence than artist can paint them. These visions, created by refraction and reflection of light, are representative of earth's realities not very far away. They figure the fancies of the poet as to heavenly and future scenes. They warrant that splendid mental portraiture of the thinker concerning good things in a good time to come. They stimulate that power of scientific imagination by which we delineate to ourselves, as apparitions, the ultimate atoms ; and the rays of light, millions of millions entering the eye every second. There is no dream so wild ; no creation so vain of dreadful thing, or of blessed spirit ; no myth, no fable so evanescent ; that is not the shadow, or science and philosophy of things beyond the veil.

Buds on the tree mean blossom ; and the blossom, fruit ; even when blossom and fruit come not, their place is taken and purpose answered by something else ; there is no loss. We obtain bits of meaning on the wings of moths, shells of eggs, in clouds, in crystals : meaning that concerns large use, which carries every created thing, and our thought of it, further than time and space, into that eternity and infinitude whence all things come and whither they return. Richness and profusion, everywhere, are inexhaustible. We are not so much on the shore of an illimitable sea, as borne on the crest of some vast wave carrying all mysteries to be solved by that Eternal Power who clothes the lily of the field with more beautiful array than that of Solomon.

Now, as we are sure that not one atom is lost, nor any force left behind and out of use : as bits of colour on the wings tell of what sort is the moth ; and the marks on shells designate the coming birds ; so human thoughts, wishes, acts,

make and display human character; tell what in the past moulded us, what in the present we are, and what in the future we shall be. Body and mind set in type and print the work of time. The gift of years before made us; and during our present existence a power that dwells not in the light alone, but in the darkness, enables us to pass from more to more. Of what we were and are nothing is lost. The child becomes the youth, the youth the man, and man's life bears immortal fruit—

“ Life is not as idle ore,
But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
And batter'd with the shocks of doom
To shape and use.”

—Lord Tennyson, “*In Memoriam*,” cxviii.

NATURALNESS OF THE SUPERNATURAL.

The visible and the invisible are so related that we cannot tell where either begins or ends. The microscope gives view of that which the unaided eye is incompetent to discern of worlds within worlds where seems no room for life to live. The telescope expands the horizon into far-off space: where, as science shows, may be existences whose life exceeds all that we can know or think. Deep calleth unto deep, and creation is that manifestation of wisdom and might extending to the lowest and meanest creature in the universe. God and nature meet in light, making all worlds teem with omens. No line can be drawn limiting man; never are we able to say, however advanced our knowledge, “We know all; there is nothing further on”: for everything is most permanent in that which is remote, and more real in the future than in the present actual event, which is only as a dark saying. Material elements are the smallest known natural engines, vehicles of many forces; diverse in their beauty, separate in their form, various in their uses. In every element and in every force is something of all that the worlds contain: what thou seest in the rising sun, what thou hearest where

waters run, the power of God, all are there. The supernatural and the natural touch everywhere and intermingle.

What is matter, force, spirit, who can tell? There is a point at which external embodiment begins, but it is further back than our earliest view of it. Life is life before we know it : and when discerned at first it is not plant nor animal, nor can we find just where this or that begins. The Eternal Power is at work in all these things, in new transformations by force, in novel distributions of substance, making and unmaking ; but the process is always masked. The most skilful observer detects no difference between work directly Divine and that by use of means. Probably a visible creation of matter would seem nothing more than a coming into view of the unseen, somewhat like the condensation of invisible vapour into steam : nevertheless, the Eternal is the very essence of nature ; and this constitutes the naturalness of the supernatural.

One force is used by another force, and transformed into yet another. Noise by modulation and rhythm becomes music. The greater and smaller vibrations of ether, by their varying velocities, produce light ; these lights combined are the white splendour of day. The laws of matter prelude the laws of light ; and life, in its higher symphonies of thought and will, enters the domain of responsibility whose final seat of judgment is in the coming time. Our sense of right and wrong is not only a reflection of what other men think, good and bad ; but the bad casts that shadow in the future which men fear ; and the good throws that finer light, our chiefest joy, by which we know of Eternal Power working for righteousness.

As we watch the flowers opening to the sun, vigorous in new life, beautiful in colour, sweet in fragrance ; we learn of an energy beyond flowers, beyond men, and greater. The realistic presentation passes into sentient perception, thence comes intellectual conception, so we know of things in relation to other things, and of our own intellectual power as a sparklet of wisdom in the world. Then we find that matter is as a great organic nerve in the universe ; space is an infinite

work-room ; time is that duration in which the Eternal, who does nothing in vain, disciplines whatsoever is created for further uses—decreed in the everlasting past, and to be accomplished in the everlasting future.

Thought advancing, we regard the sky, that noble canopy, as the brow of a grand head of Supreme Intelligence ; the philosophy of things as a Divine thought ; and creation as a materiate word, the first revelation of God Almighty. Things make continual advance, go beyond themselves ; plants, animals, men, change and change again ; are built up by influences that know neither measure nor end, and lurk in a thousand disguises. Ourselves are as living stones, and our own architects in this huge quarry the world. Poor architects, unless we combine our sentient and moral elements into a fit and durable image of that God whose creative force is in us, and whose likeness He has originated within our spirit.

The interpenetration of powers is wonderful. We grow rich physically, mentally, morally, by turning the well-doing of common things into a higher art of gain, of thought, of morals. Cleanliness of body is somewhat related to the soul's purity, and by the character of a person's adornment are hints obtained as to the spiritual constitution. Every man has his own fortune in his hands, like the artist who fashions the rough piece of marble into an idealised form of beauty ; but, as Goethe said, "The art of living rightly has to be learned like all arts, and practised with unremitting care. The capacity is born in us, but the lessons must be learned by us." The strength and the spark are in us ; but our part is to fan the spark into a flame which shall beautify and glorify all.

In all matter something seems allied to the Eternal Substance, not less than are forces a differentiation of Eternal Power. Everything tends to the future, and instead of being lost or annihilated, is so knit to that whence it came as to be of two sorts—natural and supernatural overlapping and interpenetrating everywhere. The vibrations of a gnat's wing are not lost in many diffusions of effects ; an Infinite Mind

knows of their ever-varying yet permanent distinctness. The wrong thought and the evil act, not less than devout aspiration and noble work, produce lasting results on a man's character for weal or woe. The conscience grows in its sense of eternal realities. The intellect understands, as a fact in science, that invisible essence constitutes whatever is visible. Everywhere and in everything the great below is clenched by the great above. Times past, present, future, concentrate in passing moments. Every atom, and much more our intelligence, is sealed with a sign of everlastingness.

Our reasoning as to the naturalness of the supernatural proves to the accurate thinker that things are as they are because of some inscrutable essence; that the physical, the vital, the moral, all work for the Eternal; that whatever is, not being limited to the present, passes on towards the great coming harmony; and that the universal interpenetration of powers every moment and in everything is a sign and seal that all nature's thousand changes proclaim one changeless God; the Pivot of all creation, the Reason of all we see and know, the Cause of everything, and their Solution.

Now draw a little on imagination. Our fortune is not a fixed sum of limited present attainment. Our body and our soul, as was the ancient Jewish tabernacle, are a figure of heaven and earth. The badger skins signify our rough outer condition of work and transition from place to place; but within is the lamp, with the oil kindled into flame by touch of the finger of God. What meaneth this? Our earthly house of this tabernacle being dissolved, the tabernacle will be transformed into a noble temple. Present worlds are the seeds of new and heavenly worlds; and the things, specially men, are rudiments of the glorious plenishing which will make those worlds very blissful. The complexity and wonderfulness show the high-class naturalness of the supernatural.

PERSONAL IMMORTALITY.

A man's own individual conviction of immortality is of

value only to himself. If a whole nation says, "Our intuitions are so prevalent and assured of a world to come that they greatly influence our sentiments, our morals, our whole life," that is a great testimony. If all nations, during all ages, throughout all countries, declare, "With very few exceptions, for which we are able to account, every individual has an abiding hope or fear of the future, according to his being good or bad, which so encourages virtue and restrains vice that it is the greatest conviction and moral power in the earth" —that declaration has the value of a demonstration. It rests on the same basis as do those many other intuitions which make us conscious of unseen and mighty, though unprovable, influences, giving sanction to morals, making laws, and constituting not less the axioms of mathematics than the spirit of art which renders the supreme artist's name immortal, and crowns with imperishable memorial every poet who excels.

There is reason to believe that as consciousness, suspended during sleep, awakes in dreams, in processes of high poetic imagination, and in extensive mathematical and philosophic research, some persons are capable, in certain conditions of mind and body, to project themselves beyond the body. They are without the sense of time and place, but know that they are in communion with things spiritual. The condition is not so much a suspension of being as an elevation; not a waking trance, but entrancement of gladness, or of sweet composure, with a sense of mystery. We need not think of those mostly false and ineffective methods by which in times of superstition men held intercourse with demons. The other real modes, by study of Holy Scripture to enter the minds of the prophets; specially that study of Christ's person and character by which believers are made one with Him, and He one with them, in blissful times; are capable of verification by all who discern the Spirit. To repeat, as some do, their name until they lose sense of their own identity, is not productive of intense personal consciousness with most people who make the experiment, but of a baffling bewilderment. The use of anæsthetics causes hallucination, not reliable expansion; animal magnetism is to be distrusted;

and the use of mediums should be reprobated. Spiritualism fills most of us, however the asserted results may be obtained, with conviction of intense triviality. Fervent prayer, long continued, or very earnest sacred thought communicates a delightful sense of the Divine presence, of access to angelic beings, of fellowship with departed saints, such as St. Paul (Acts xxvii. 23, 24 ; 2 Cor. xii. 2-4), St. John (Rev. i. 10), Cornelius, and many others (Acts x. 3 ; 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10, 15) experienced. These prove that the dead are not dead, that boundless existence opens beyond the grave, and that not until then and after is true life possessed. It is folly for those whose frames are so animal that spiritual experiences are far from them to deny realisations which thousands know full well. We agree with Lord Tennyson, "Out of darkness come the hands that reach through nature, moulding man."

Our best men are interpenetrated, consciously and unconsciously, with motives carrying them on to the future. Their chiefest possession is not the having attained, but that they are attaining. Their great joy is joy of the future. As their faculties enlarge by physical and mental research, the development of strength brings a glow, a flash, an abiding light. They can shout and sing in anticipation of a further coming power. These are thinkers. There are other men whom not merely the vividness of sight, the beauty of colours, the delicacies of life's banquet, make glad ; the feeling is of some energy, transformed into sentiment, which passes into conviction of immortality ; these are the men of genius. Both these sorts of men, the profound and the brilliant, know that the intelligent and responsible part of us, that which is capable of good and evil, grows, when duly ministered to, as the body grows being rightly nourished. Good minds strive for development, regard art and science as of no dignity unless the cleverness is a similitude of moral culture, and the moral culture is that which lays hold on eternal life. Not the forces which are concentrated into power of success, not the new formations of prosperous schemes, not the strength of will and skill, plucking flowers from beds of nettles, but in the tribulation that works patience, in the patience that acquires

experience, in the abiding experience that gathers hope, in the hope that strengthens into assured faith, do the men of common sense, the great workers in our human hive, find personal assurance of everlasting life ; and as hands do their duty, and as duty clears their eyes, say, "We are more than flesh and blood ; we are being fitted for a world to come."

The force and indestructibility and definition or shape of an atom are its relation to Eternal Power ; to space, and so to infinitude ; to time, and thus to eternity. Atoms are countless, but every one is subject to the influences of numberless worlds. An atom can no more go astray than a world can go astray. The ultimate atom is the smallest known indestructible physical unity. Unity, individuality, a sort of personality is a general characteristic of whatever exists. The universe is a unity ; every world is a unity ; stones and metals have their individuality not less than plants and beasts ; man is the most complete, complex, and wonderful unity—material, vital, sentient, mental, spiritual. Now, if an atom, the smallest unity, is indestructible, we are sure that man, the greatest earthly spiritual unity and person, is also indestructible.

The human body begins by a positing of particles. It is continued, renewed, enlarged by a repositing of not the same, but similar particles. The outer man possesses a power of psychological growth by which the inner man becomes reasonable and responsible. Our feet are clay, and rest on clay ; but the head, raised aloft, projects thoughts wider than the visible world ; and this capacity is used by the inner man as a pocket-measure of the universe ; and we not only know ourselves to be the same individuals during every part and the whole of our life, but we know ourselves as able, physically, mentally, and morally, to pass from space to infinitude, from time to eternity, from thoughts of the creature into the presence of the Creator, whom we love, we worship, we praise. This particular reasoning in itself is not proof ; but does it not warrant belief that we are immortal, even where we cannot prove ?

If the vibration of a gnat's wing, and the pulsation of my heart, and the thought of my mind continue for ever and

ever in their effects, even after my death, shall not the greater personal power also continue? The less is blessed by the greater; is there no blessing for the greater? If the little bits of ourselves never perish, so as to become nothing at all, is the whole man to be counted of no permanent value? Does the Eternal Power only care for small things? Common sense says "No." Our sacred aspirations, making life so warm; our ennobling thought, giving intellectual grandeur; are not a momentary fluorescence darkening into eternal gloom; greatest purposes are realest purposes; highest meanings are truest meanings; man was not made to die; for if every part continues as to its essence, surely that essence combined forms a personal permanent whole. We know whither life's pathway leads; it leads to that God who will not leave us in the dust. As we deal kindly with our kind, reasonably with ourselves, and naturally with nature, we are sure that, dying, we shall not lose ourselves. The universe, like an open book, is full of one far-off Divine event; for that our conscience affirms we are being prepared, and God is just.

Our bodies perish moment by moment; many times in the course of an ordinary life's length every particle in our frame, and the whole of that frame, go from us; new particles, but similar, replace the old to make a new body—not the same, but like the former. Something permanent remains as a master principle; the body, every bit of it and the whole, has gone; but some cut or mark, stain or mole, remains on the skin. Your parents are dead, but they have left particular shapings and markings which show that you are their child; some touch of gout, weakness of heart, tendency to consumption, taint of insanity, and that worst heredity—madness of unbelief—prove that the dead are not dead, they live in you. This permanence, despite continuous and entire change; this dying, yet living in good and evil; are a signature on and in every one that we belong to the future; knowledge of things we see conveys meaning as to that we do not see, and this gives the force of reality, assured evidence of that for which we hope. We are not "the fools of loss;"

every man, even the very heedless, has incorporate hopes which go far on ; there is "a perfect flower for human time ;" we are not as—

" An infant crying in the night ;
An infant crying for the light ;
And with no language but a cry."

—Lord Tennyson, "*In Memoriam*," *liv.*

Now, in use of that scientific imagination which discerns the ultimate atoms, though not seen, and can measure those unseen ethereal vibrations which fashion light's peculiarities in the spectrum, whereby we see whatever is seen ; look around with that hope which made the apostles of Christ so glad. The created systems of starry worlds are in such vast profusion that we cannot number them ; these worlds, every moment under the care and superintendence of God, are more numerous, we think, than all the human beings who have existed, or will exist, to the close of time. These worlds, their physical laws, general features, diversified circumstances, and possibly the minutest movements of myriads and myriads of sensitive and intellectual inhabitants, are governed by never-failing wisdom and power. How then can we doubt that the continuous identity of our soul, not less than the particles of our mortal body, will be preserved by Him whose presence fills the universe ? Suppose that the whole family of man numbers more than five hundred thousand millions of souls, to start into new life at the general resurrection. It is reasonable to think that there will be at least a corresponding number of worlds for every one to be, as Adam was, in Paradise ; but with better fate, a ruler in the image and likeness of God. We learn from the most advanced knowledge that things are not taken away to be of no more use ; they ripen onwards ; are parts and portions of a vaster expanse ; giving assurance of a larger hope.

We enjoy three kinds of vision : the physical, the mental, the moral. Physical vision affords proof of manifold unseen existences ; mental vision discerns in the reason of things a higher reason ; moral vision excels both, and pierces to the

reality of a personal God. The representative men of this triple vision are Newton, Pascal, the prophets and apostles. A well-balanced intellect doubts not as to all or any of the utilities represented by the three. Newton and Pascal had not greater proof of material facts and mental truths than were given of spiritual things to the prophets and apostles. Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Daniel, well knew what happened to them ; it was impossible to err. Ezekiel, who saw earthly giving way to heavenly things, was more certain of that than of anything in history. Habakkuk, when every hope perished, hoped in God, and was sure of life. John, who rested on the Lord's bosom, knew the Lord was God, and, enabled to see what happened in heaven, found the greatest certainties. St. Paul, journeying to Damascus, encountered a wisdom and a power excelling all other. Their faith never dispensed with reason, and their reason attained its brightest light and life in the experiences of faith ; they were not dreamers, nor deluders, nor deluded, and we have, as they had, "deep-seated in our mystic frame," the precious truth—"life shall live for evermore."

Smaller experiences are our common lot. The secret impulse within carrying us beyond the present narrow circle ; the consciousness of larger capacities co-operating as with a co-inspiring whole, nothing as yet lying finished and done ; all these sign and seal us for a rich inheritance ; they are in our conscience, as a golden ring on our finger, uniting us to the future ; they are jewels of thought and emotion which enrich the present life with promise of a better ; they are God's promise—and God is true.

Not unfrequently at the close of day we behold splendid scenes ; clouds, driven forward by the wind, collect in groups representing high mountains separated by deep valleys ; rivers wind, here and there are cataracts, and groves of trees interspersed with habitations ; not enlightened by solar rays in front, but by reflection from behind ; "a fantastic display of magnificence and terror," melting away at nightfall, when stars come in multitude to shine with perpetual light on the bosom of darkness. This heavenward reflection of earth, a

lifting to the sky, is the relative of that which carries man, the products of man, and the materials of nature, to a tomb in the ocean. A great part of the city of Rome is no longer on the ancient site, but at the bottom of the Tiber, or washed into the sea—a strange transfer. In the course of ages all coast lines are changed; vessels, artillery, treasures, are lost in the deep—yet not lost, for there are two kinds of level on the earth: the apparent in a straight line for small uses; the true, which is a spherical curve for great distances, or tangent of the globe. One level, if we apply it to future use, is for things not conscious of personality; the other level of spiritual meaning is for our instruction; the line of life forms a tangent of the universe, a way of approach to the greater, the higher life, where we shall indeed find “the keys of all the creeds.”

There are other differences: we cannot tell why or how the sap of a tree is made sweet in the pulp of its fruit, stony in its kernel, bitter in its leaf, insipid in the wood; nor why or how the same soil produces healthful aliment and deadly poison; nor how the slight shades of differences, separating lower parts of the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, pass into those grand distinctions which distinguish the living from the dead, and man from beast. They are only apprehensible as wrought by Him who enables the insects, before they have seen a web, to spin transparent workmanship; who fits every one of them for its own mode of life and industry; who puts into them, as into the hearts of men, an intuition of the future; making all lives rightly understood, a happy physiognomy, in their presentiments of a commensurate future, harvest time, when every good man's loss will prove a gain with far-off interest.

Nature has given these her truths in richest colouring, in the permanent instinct of insects, in the many intuitions of men. Every day has object lessons; whatever our senses reveal and our reason apprehends are the bones and muscle, the veins, arteries, and life-strings of knowledge; every knowledge everywhere and always, in little and great, is a key to other knowledge, and a prelude to other states. Take

knowledge of thyself—death is not death to any man, unless life is so wasted that the second death shows 'tis too late to seek a newer world, and no capacity remains for the life delicious, and thoughts that grow with the ages. Oh! why is it that men will not see eternal situations? Why aught is dark or clear? Why we have an upper and an under, day and night? Would they open eye and heart, immortality should be found more true and blissfully real than absence paints their be'oved. Divine force would draw their soul to the cross where Jesus died, and in that death of the Son of God would be infallible proof how rich and glorious must be that future for which an infinite life was not too great a price.

There is no impossibility even as to our resurrection body growing from the present form—its seed. The permanent individuality of a man, as to his frame, is by the continuous aggregation of similar, not the same, material particles into identical structure. As to the soul's individuality, it is of two chief parts: the rational power, apprehending; the will, spiritual power, moving. As to life, it weaves the frame—the frame does not make the life; and as life came, by something greater, to give individuality; and reason, to confer intelligence; and will, to convey a sense of right and wrong; so may and will life come again to gather purified particles into nobler form as fit garment of the soul. As if to assure of this, every good man in his soul possesses more life with the lapse of life; already prepares and is being prepared for the new body and higher state in the new world; the years past repose behind him, like a fruitful plain, full of promise for all that is to come. Well is it for every man to take heed that he use aright the existence that now is. The serpent and the bee drink liquid from the same flower. The very aliment appears to change in them. The serpent makes poison. The bee makes honey. Our own living will, our enduring part, gives character to ourselves and to our deeds in the greater light.

FURTHER THOUGHTS.

Man is not a den wherein Hope and Fear, two enemies,

contend for the mastery. As a microcosm of the universe, he represents the power, the life, the wisdom of it : these are eternal. His noblest powers are the truest ; they make him desire and fit him for more truth, fuller life. As a sense of immortality, they light his face from within and find whispers in the deep night, "all is well."

These whispers do not derange reason. They make waking moments full of things seen by inner perception. Sometimes, by a strange faculty, we live years in a few moments. A sort of spectrograph casts within a light from before, and fashions an articulation boding future embodiment. Men who see aright find immortality depicted everywhere. The apostles beheld God in Christ, and so passed on to the light of life in the Resurrection.

Dull men, of life darkened in the brain, cry "delusion!" Like the uncultured who are incapable of delicate discernment in high art and science, they, more incapable, deny what Isaiah, Ezekiel, St. John, beheld. They, knowing all the while that in advanced scientific research the visible disappears, and that then we are in company with the Eternal, do not use these good moments, do not know that they come from the higher life. No wonder that they say, "We die as the beasts die." They are well depicted in words used by a Frenchman, Lamartine—"A tree covered with flowers without fruit that ripens, and without roots that have any hold of the soil."

We cannot make ourselves believe, but we are able to inquire and apply ; we can refuse to be content with commonest things, and raise our senses and spirit to the beautiful and perfect, nourishing our faculty to the seeing. One can try every day to be a little further-sighted, stronger, and to make the true more truly our own. Every soul is at times conscious of a capability not fully used. The happiest mark of it is an unaccustomed cheerfulness, the reason of the joy not being understood. Unbelief, missing all these, is not caused by mental inability, but by obliquity of heart. In a man's own self lies the difficulty to be mastered, and in himself is that by which the mastery may be won. If he separate himself

from thoughts which drag down to animalism, and give greater use to the nobler faculties, he shall do well. As a man of science he will acquire more science, and know that natural processes do not elevate themselves and become more distinctive; a plant, not cared for in the garden, or in the field, does not fruit better and better; the crab does not become an apple; nor the wild dog acquire the good parts of our own domestic friend; nor the monkey share in mathematical and philosophical research. He will feel that it is folly indeed to think that the world's great benefactors, Jesus Christ, apostles, prophets, are to have their work undone; and that we are to give unrestricted scope to the animal and to fetter the angel. As he aims to do that which most helps all men to be better and do better, the proofs of immortality will shine bright and clear.

The truth of immortality, the fact that as we sow shall be the reaping, throws light into the world's darkness; explains the difference between good and evil; verifies Holy Scripture, and confirms the statements of ancient sacred men that they received messages from the dead, heard voices of spirits, and saw visions of angels. If we distrust Eliphaz, the Temanite, we firmly believe St. Peter who discerned Godhead in Christ (Matt. xvi. 15-17); and we acknowledge that there is a power by which we come to the spirits of just men made perfect (Heb. xii. 22-24). If any say, "I have no such experience"; let him try to have it. There may, he thinks, not be one real proof in the world of immortality; all science he asserts is against hope for the dead; not one inward ray of light shows a pathway beyond the grave; but if he abides patiently on God, a hand will come out of the light to mould him, and in that light he will know, as Elijah did, that there are more than seven thousand witnesses for the truth where none as yet have been known. If, like the impotent man, he have lain eight-and-thirty years waiting for light of intellect and power of will, the voice of Jesus, "Wilt thou be made whole?" coming some day, shall heal him and send him on his way rejoicing.

JOSEPH W. REYNOLDS.

THE MOSAIC IDEA OF PROPERTY.

IT is one thing to discover defects in the body politic ; it is another thing to know where to look for the remedy. So we are assured by the high authority of Richard Hooker ; and our minds instinctively recognise the truth and accuracy of the statement. We feel that a very moderate amount of penetration—especially if we ourselves happen in any way to be interested parties—will suffice to make us conscious that something is wrong ; but we also feel that the putting the wrong right demands a width of survey and a power of grasping details, and withal a judgment and a tact, which are possessed by a very small minority of the human race.

Perhaps at no time is the force of the old saying more distinctly felt than when we come to consider seriously the present condition of English society. A man must be singularly selfish, or singularly stupid, or singularly bewildered with optimistic theories if he can be satisfied with what he sees round him. To most of us, the scene we witness—with its enormous accumulation of wealth and lavish expenditure, and its almost impossibility of living—is simply appalling. “The poor ye shall always have with you” is what we hear in certain quarters. “The poor,” yes! but semi-starvation, hopeless misery, and degradation—an environment which makes common decency an impossible thing, and which sows, as in a hotbed, the seeds of every brutal and selfish lust, no! We are perfectly ready to recognise that, in a world like ours, what with inevitable sickness and constitutional feebleness, what with accident and the creeping on of old age and infirmity, there will ever be a class which makes large demands upon the charity and kindness of their fellow-men. But we simply refuse to believe that there is any necessity of God’s imposing, which shall turn the great boon of existence into a curse and make the burden of it intolerable.

From other quarters we hear that the fault lies with the

people themselves who suffer from this crushing calamity of incurable poverty. "Look at their furious drinking,"—it is said—"their persistent improvidence, their wild pleasures, and lay the blame on the shoulders that ought to bear it." And, certainly, there is truth enough in the allegation to give point to it, and to make it tell. And so, no doubt, there was some truth in the estimate which the Pharaoh of the Exodus might have formed of the Israelites, who bent and groaned under the yoke he had laid upon them. Amidst the polished and elegant statesmen and soldiers of his luxurious court, might he not have sneered at the crass ignorance, and gross tastes, and coarse and filthy appearance, and vicious proneness to animal indulgence which characterised that horde of unhappy slaves? To him and to his refined people it might have seemed as if it was by a sort of Divine decree that these degraded foreigners were there to do the dirty work of the country, with which the true owners of the soil did not care to contaminate their dainty fingers. These wretched Hebrews were far too wretched for an Egyptian gentlemen to trouble himself about. *Ay, but who made the Hebrews what they were?* Was not their unhappy condition at least as much the consequence as it was the cause of their degradation? And did not the greater part at least of the sin, when traced to its right source, lie at the door of that fatal policy which had ground the people down by long centuries of crushing and demoralising servitude?

I shall be understood, I hope. I simply urge that, when our attention is directed to the failings—real enough as they are—of the lowest strata of our English society, we are justified in replying that the argument is, after all, a superficial one, and does not go to the root of the matter; that we are bound in all fairness to regard these people, in part at least, as the victims of a system of things into which they have been thrown, bound hand and foot; that they are being crushed under a burden which it is absolutely impossible for them, unaided, to throw off.

The question then presents itself—Is this state of things to be accepted as inevitable? Are we comfortable people

to shrug our shoulders and pass by on the other side, trying to hear as little and see as little as we possibly can? Or if deliverance is possible, from what quarter may we expect it to arise?

We point to Christianity as likely to supply the remedy, and we are met with a chorus of loud derision. The nostrum has been tried, we are told—tried for hundreds of years—and has conspicuously failed. None but a man who is content to live in a "fool's paradise" will look to Christianity for help. Not only has it been proved ineffective, but it is under its very shadow, by its tolerance, nay, by its very assistance, that this hideous system of abuses has grown up. Tell us of something else; don't talk to us at this time of day about Christianity!

Nevertheless we do look to it, as our only hope. It is conceivable, we think, that Christianity has not been allowed fair play in the matter. It is conceivable that we have misinterpreted some of our Divine Master's teachings, and that we shall have to re-model some of our ideas. But we know that there is no other agency which can be entrusted with the work of the reconstruction of modern society, if such reconstruction be really called for; and we know, too, that there is no other power on earth that can possibly accomplish the task.

Let us consider, then, how far we have really admitted into our minds *God's thoughts* on this important subject. And, as a slight advance in the right direction, let us turn our attention in the present paper to what may be called the "Mosaic Idea of Property."

We often hear the expression "Business is business" fall from the lips of persons who are kindly and brotherly enough in themselves, and also, perhaps, can advance some claim to be regarded as really religious people. The man who uses the words does not mean that success in business is to be aimed at without regard to the law of God. Probably, he would scorn the "tricks of trade," which are too easily tolerated by a large proportion of traders; and certainly he would not dream of attempting to justify anything like sharp

or fraudulent practice. The idea in the man's mind is rather this: that commerce is to be conducted upon one principle, the ordinary intercourse of mankind upon another; that in business-hours a man must be expected to buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest; to push and drive to the full extent of his capability; to strive to outwit and to surpass all his competitors; in fact, to treat his fellow-men as if they were so many counters with which the game is to be played, and who are not to be considered at all so long as the etiquette and rules of the game are carefully observed. That is the rule in business-hours; but when business-hours are over, then the man may take a different line; then brotherliness, kindness, sympathy (left out in the cold before) may be allowed to come in; then there may be room for consideration for others, and for the readiness to part with our substance at the call of religion or charity.

Now, seeing that this view of human life and its obligations is based upon the ordinary idea of property, let us consider, as we here propose to do, that mode of constructing human society which is exhibited in the history of the Jews, as recorded in that book commonly called the Old Testament. I think we shall find that the Jewish system strikes a very heavy blow at the common idea on the subject. But what is the common idea? I think we may express it in the following language:—"This is mine. It is mine, it may be, by inheritance; it may be by honest acquisition; and, of course, I can do what I will with my own. I may admit you to a share of it, but that is if I like. You cannot expect me to do it. You have no claim, no right to urge. If I give you anything, it is wholly by an act of benevolence on my part—that is all."

Now let us examine this idea by the light of the Jewish institution.

First, as to the land (which the Jews entered upon by right of conquest, much in the same way as that in which we English became possessed of England). The law-giver is especially careful to teach them that the land is not theirs; it belongs to God. God claims it. They are simply tenants at will. Hear what God says, or what the law-giver represents

God as saying: "The land shall not be sold for ever, for the land is Mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me; and in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land." Then there was to be "a Sabbath of rest" to the land, during which the land was to remain until led, and this whether the owner liked it or not. I cannot tell if these injunctions were observed. Possibly they were not. Still, there they definitely stand in the statute book.

Then again, there is that most remarkable law of the "year of Jubilee," by virtue of which property reverted to its original possessors. No doubt more purposes than one were served by this enactment. But one most important effect of it must surely have been (if it were really obeyed) to prevent the accumulation of large property and vast landed estates. And that this end was intended and aimed at I am greatly inclined to believe, when I remember the words of the prophet Isaiah, "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth! In mine ears, said the Lord of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair houses, without inhabitant. Yea! ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah." That is to say, the curse of barrenness and desolation will descend upon the greediness of the great men of the land if they should dare to extend their own possessions—to create, in fact, parks, and moors, and pleasure-gardens for themselves, at the expense of their poorer and helpless neighbours.

Let us leave the land, and pass on now to the discussion of another topic: that of the results of labour. "Surely here," a man will say, "here, at least, I have a right to be undisturbed by any claim! Here I may do what I will with my own." But let us see what was said to the Jewish farmer or owner of land. "You must not reap the corners of your field!" "What, not my own field, if I choose?" "No; you mustn't shave too close. You must not beat over a second time the boughs of your olive-tree!"

In old Palestine, if a man passed through your vineyard, through the pathway or by the side of the vines, and found himself hungry, he might reach his hand and take the bunches and eat his fill. No one could say a word against him. If he went through your standing corn, and was so disposed, he could pluck the ears of corn right and left to satisfy his hunger, though he is forbidden to use a sickle.

“What!” says the spirit of modern proprietorship. “Is not my property, all of it, my own, to do what I will with?” According to the mind of God, *no!*

In the third place, as to business transactions with your neighbours. The Jew must take no interest of another Jew. “Take no usury of him, nor increase. But fear thy God that thy brother may live with thee.” Now, of course, it will occur to us all that such an enactment as this was suited to an agricultural people; but could not be possibly enforced in a people largely devoted to commerce. And it will occur to you also that there is nothing unbrotherly in taking a legitimate rate of interest for your money. Look at it in this way. I, we will say, have money, but no business capacity; and you have business-capacity, but no money. Will you take my money and make me no return for it? Would that be brotherly? “No,” you say, “I would do nothing of the kind. I would not be so mean; especially as (according to the supposition) I should leave you with nothing to live upon. I should give you a share in the profits of the business, a fair share.” Well, what is that but giving and taking interest for the loan of money? And I must confess that all declamation against interest in the abstract, against interest without consideration of circumstance—seems to me exceedingly absurd and futile.

What the Divine law struck at was clearly the selfish endeavour to enrich yourself at your brother's expense; to take advantage of his necessities to drive a bargain with him, of which all, or most of the benefit, should be on your side, and none, or nearly none should be on his.

Once again, according to the Mosaic injunction, the Jew is to deal not only generously, kindly with his brother, but he is

to treat him with all proper and delicate consideration for his feelings. "Sentiment!" some people may say. Perhaps so; but sentiment has a very important part to play in human life. "Be pitiful, be courteous," says one of the Apostles. Says the same man, "Honour all men." *All men!* Respect a man—*i.e.*, on account of the humanity that is in him; recognise the true dignity of human nature; see Christ in your brother man, whatever the man may be—even though sunk in vice; even though he may be your opponent in religious views; even though he may be your rival in business; even though he may hate, and revile, and injure you. "Respect him," says Christianity; "you will not win him without respecting him."

Let us then mark the delicacy of feeling which is characteristic—at least, so far—of the Jewish law. There is to be amongst the people who are to be brothers, of course, no grinding of the faces of the poor; of course, no starvation wages; of course, no getting all you can out of your brother man with as little expense to yourself as possible. But that is not enough; there is something more. There is to be kindness, consideration, and delicacy when thy neighbour comes to borrow of you (says Moses), and you think it right to take a security for the return of the money. You are not to treat him roughly, coarsely, brusquely; on the contrary, you are to treat him like a gentleman! Well, those are not the words, but these are:—"When thou dost lend thy brother anything thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge—thou shalt stand abroad; and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad to thee. And if the man be poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge. In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment and bless thee."

I will not multiply quotations, and perhaps I have quoted enough to show the spirit of the Jewish law; and now let us observe, that in all that has been quoted *we have not got an appeal to better feelings, but positive enactment.* It is not "Thou oughtest to do so; it is suitable and proper to do

so." No; but "Thou shalt do so." In other words, "Thou shalt not claim entire right over thine own property. Another person has a share in it; and on the condition, that you recognise his right to have a share in it, I give it thee."

And here lies the pith and point of the whole matter. God (we will say) grants me success in life. He enables me, by giving me health and strength, and brains, and friends, and opportunity, to gather round me a considerable portion of the good things of this world—*i.e.*, in other words, to acquire a fortune. But He does this on condition that I admit others less fortunate than I am, others my brethren, to a share in it. "Oh, yes," I say, "I quite recognise that principle, it is a very good principle. Take this ten-pound note for your soup kitchen." But is it quite safe to leave me, who am a selfish being—I am no better than other men—to measure for myself my own liability? Is it safe that I should myself estimate for myself the proportion in which I shall admit my less fortunate brothers to a participation in my good things? I think not. There must be some amount of compulsion put upon me by the action of society; and, indeed, we already recognise that it should be so. For instance, I may be inclined to say, "Leave me to give what I choose to the poor; don't interfere with my liberty." But the law says, "Thou shalt pay poor-rates." I may think—many do—what rubbish this talk about education is; what do the lower classes want with education? Are they not born hewers of wood and drawers of water? I will not help the scheme on either by my sympathy or my money! "But thou shalt," says the law; "thou shalt pay down cash for the maintenance of Board schools." The principle is thus already recognised amongst us; and the contention of some is that a more extended application of it, aided by an enlightenment of the public conscience on the subject of property, might do at least something towards ameliorating the unhappy and unchristian state of things in which we find ourselves placed.

It comes, then, to this. The poor man says, "It is not

your charity that I want, but justice! I claim a share in the good things which you possess." You will reply, "I will give, if I choose." "No," says the other, "that is not it. I have a claim, which you are bound to recognise if you are a Christian; and in support of that claim I appeal to your own Bible. Look at God's enactments about the Jews. I put forward a claim then, and a claim founded on the brotherly nature of human society, and upon the teaching of Him whom you call your God."

Let us not put this contention as if it were absolutely and altogether ridiculous; or as if it were nothing better than the outcome of idleness and greed. Perhaps there is more in it than some of us have been accustomed to imagine.

Now this line of argument has been met by the reply, that the case of the Jewish polity is so absolutely exceptional, so abnormal, that it is impossible to draw any conclusion from it which shall fairly apply to the existing state of things. But is not the objection a strange one on the lips of a believer in Divine revelation, bound, as he is, to regard the Jewish system as the basis of the Christian superstructure which has been erected upon it; or rather, which has grown out of it, as the flower grows out of the bud? Must not we believers hold that the Jewish system is a platform which God used educating and training mankind? Under the strange history, under the apparatus of the supernatural, which circumstances rendered necessary, God was laying down and teaching us fundamental principles. He was using "object-lessons," if I may so speak, as a teacher does in an infant school, and preparing the way for the maturity of the human race. Amongst other things, He gives us there *His ideas* of the principle on which all human society, in its various forms, ought to be constructed; and what we have to do is not to fashion theories of our own, which are sure to come to grief in the long run, but to find out the Divine idea of human society, and to make, if we can, all things bend to it and subserve it—even our own prejudices, our own convenience, our own personal interest.

GORDON CALTHROP.

NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING RESPECT- ING MINISTRY AND PRIESTHOOD.

AT a time when many are advocating and teaching what amounts to an implied identity of the Christian ministry with the Levitical priesthood, by designating the proclaimer of good news a sacerdotal priest, one who offers sacrifice to God and makes atonement for the sins of the people, we may be excused in examining their claims for thus acting.

On such a subject as this patristic lore cannot be expected to afford us much assistance, as little stress can be placed on the historical argument as compared with the Scriptural. Our appeal to the Fathers, if made at all, will be for testimony to matters of fact, and not for any authority on the subject. If, however, the collateral records of the purest ages of Christianity go to confirm the result of previous inquiry, conducted wholly on Scriptural grounds, nothing forbids our availing ourselves of the same. No fact or testimony from post-Apostolic times can of itself prove or disprove a practice to be from God, because practices, which are plainly without or opposed to Scripture evidence, were at an early period introduced, and pleaded for by some as of Divine authority. The New Testament, and that alone can prove such authority.

It must be admitted that little was said at and immediately after the descent of the Holy Spirit respecting organisation, or brethren occupying prominent positions in the Church which was at Jerusalem. At that period, the external appears to have been regulated by the internal. The manifested results all sprung from unseen workings in the hearts of individual believers. As we might expect, true faith led to confession, and a common confession called forth mutual sympathy. Brotherly love led to association.

So intense was the common life of the Church that it extended even to outward things, and thus at a bound reached

its ideal. For a short time the bond of brotherhood was the only one which was recognised by believers in Jesus Christ. The inner fellowship of Divine life strove, notwithstanding, from the beginning to exhibit itself in an outward fellowship, and very soon appropriated to itself a definite form. A form in which, as Neander, I think, somewhere observed, it could appear and shape itself as a spiritual body ; because, without such form, no association for whatever purpose could possibly have actual being and subsistence. To this end a certain organisation was necessary, a certain relative superordination and subordination of the different members, according to the different positions assigned them in reference to the whole, a certain guidance and direction of the common concerns, and therefore separation of organs destined for that particular end.

It must be admitted that no society of men could possibly hold together without officers, without rules ; and the Church of Christ was not exempt from this universal law. During the lifetime of the Apostles, and under their direction, Churches made choice of "bishops" or "elders" and "deacons." The first intimation we have of such a step being taken is met with in Acts vi. 1-3. There does not appear to have been any recognised helpers of the Apostles previous to the appointment of the seven, unless the young men spoken of in Acts v. 6 occupied that position. One thing, however, is quite certain, there was no such thing as an election of brethren to official positions in the Church previous to that of the seven in Acts vi.

Respecting ministry, we learn from Eph. iv. 1-13 that there were brethren in the earliest Churches who possessed *extraordinary* gifts, and who occupied *temporary* positions, and other brethren whose gifts were *ordinary*, and who occupied positions intended to be *permanent* and continued.

Foremost amongst those whose gifts and positions were *extraordinary* and *temporary* were *Apostles*, whose name imports that they were sent forth by the Saviour in a very special manner, in agreement with His own words (John xx. 21 ; and Matt. x. 1, 5, 6). It is worthy of note that Paul

speaks of himself as "an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God," and that he became an Apostle, "not of man, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father." The name, it is true, appears to have been applied from the first in a much wider sense to all who bore witness of Christ; "But the fact that the looser and more general meaning of the word held its place side by side with its special and distinctive application—the fact that it is not used exclusively in its special any more than in its general meaning, even by the Apostle of the Gentiles—tells not for, but against, the Irvingite doctrine of the continuity and permanence of the office."¹

Apostles were first in the order of time, and chief as regards importance in connection with the Church of Christ. They had no equals, and they have never had any successors. Their mission and work were extraordinary, and consequently restricted to themselves. Bishops or elders coexisted with Apostles, but did not, neither could they, in any manner become their successors. "It is certain that in no instance were the Apostles called 'bishops' in any other sense than they were equally called 'presbyters' and 'deacons.' It is certain that in no instance before the beginning of the third century the title or function of the Pagan or Jewish priesthood is applied to the Christian pastors."²

Apostles had no permanent connection with particular Churches in any one locality, but wandered to and fro as they would in the Church at large, even so late as the end of the first or commencement of the second century. We learn from a recently-discovered document of that period: "And let every Apostle that cometh to you be received as the Lord. And he shall not remain (beyond) one day; but, if there be need, the next also; but if he remain three days he is a false prophet. And let the Apostle, when going away, take nothing but bread to last him till he reach his next lodging-place; and if he ask for money he is a false prophet."³

¹ Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek*.

² Dean Stanley, *Christian Institutions*, p. 188, 2nd ed., 1881.

³ Didache, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, chap. xi.

The next in order whose gifts and position in the Church were both *extraordinary* and *temporary* were *prophets*. Reference is here made to those gifted brethren referred to in Acts xi. 27, 28; xxi. 10, 11, and elsewhere. Many passages in the New Testament have been greatly obscured, if not altogether nullified, by misunderstanding the simple meaning of the words rendered prophet and prophesy. A prophet is generally supposed to be one who had the ability to predict future events. Its primary meaning, however, is, "*one to whom and through whom God speaks.*" To prophesy means "*to announce something hidden, on the strength of a Divine revelation.*" The idea of foretelling future events is not inherently connected with the words; even in the cases where the individual, moved by God, utters future things—the being moved by God, and not the insight into futurity, is referred to by them.¹

The gift possessed by prophets in the early Church appears to have consisted in an immediate communication of an exact and competent knowledge of truths already revealed by God through His inspired servants. Those who possessed this gift were qualified, independently of all ordinary means, forthwith to teach any assembly of believers. They differed from Apostles, who possessed the gift of wisdom, inasmuch as the latter had new truths revealed to them; and they differed from ordinary teachers who were under the necessity of acquiring their knowledge of the great principles of revelation by a diligent study of the same, and the employment of all subsidiary means at their command.

From the *Didache* we learn that prophets were recognized and received by the earlier Churches; "And every prophet that speaketh in the Spirit ye shall not try nor judge; for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven. Yet not every one that speaketh in the Spirit is a prophet, but only if he have the ways of the Lord. From their ways, therefore, shall the false prophet and the prophet be known."²

¹ See Cremer.

² *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, chap. xi.

Evangelists were also endowed with *extraordinary* gifts, and occupied *temporary* positions in connection with the earliest Churches.

In reference to the teaching of the New Testament respecting *ministry*, it may be well to observe that the words translated *ministry*, except when predicated of Christ Himself (Rom. xv. 8 ; Matt. xx. 28 ; Heb. viii. 6), are used to denote any service of believers to God and to His people, though in our Authorised Version their meaning is occasionally weakened or perverted. An improved rendering is, however, met with in the Revised Version. In Heb. viii. 6, and ix. 21, *ministry* is given as a translation of *leitourgia*, elsewhere rendered "service." The word *diakonia* is found thirty-four times in the New Testament ; in sixteen places it is rendered "ministry ;" in six, "ministration ;" in four, "service ;" in three, "ministering ;" in two, "administrations ;" in one, "office ;" in one, "relief ;" and in one, "to minister." The word *diakoneō*, meaning to bring advantage to others by service of some kind, is met with in thirty-seven places ; in twenty-three it is rendered "minister ;" in ten, "service ;" in two, "administer ;" and in two, using "the office of a deacon." The word *diakonos* occurs thirty times ; in twenty places it is rendered "ministers ;" in seven, "servants ;" in three, "deacons."

A careful examination of all the passages will result in showing that any person who serves Christ, in whatever capacity it may be, is His *diakonos*, or minister.

Reference having been made to *permanent* officers in the Christian Church during the Apostles' days, and who were elected under their direction, it will be expected that some notice must be taken of their position and appointment.

Elders are mentioned in Acts xiv. 23 ; xv. 2, 4, 6, 22, 23 ; xx. 17 ; xxi. 18 ; 1 Tim. v. i. 17, 19 ; Titus i. 5 ; 1 Peter v. 1 ; James v. 14. *Bishops* are referred to in Acts xx. 28 ; Phil. i. 1 ; 1 Tim. iii. 2 ; Titus i. 7 ; and in 1 Peter ii. 25, where the Saviour is spoken of as "the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls." It is admitted that those who occupied the position of bishops or overseers were charged with certain functions of superintendence. The term *elders*—*presbuteroi*—is often used,

it is true, for the purpose of expressing seniority. In the New Testament, however, it is frequently applied to brethren occupying prominent positions in different communities. Elders and bishops are in fact employed as interchangeable terms; they are nowhere named together in Apostolic writings as being distinct from each other. Bishops and deacons are named apparently as an exhaustive division of the ordinary office-bearers in the Churches of the New Testament. In addition to his addressing believers at Philippi, Paul employs plural terms both with regard to bishops and deacons in the same local Church. Timothy, in his first letter, says, "If a man desire the office of a bishop he desireth a good work;" "likewise must the deacons be grave," &c. (iii. 1, 8). Then again, the same persons are described by both names; the "elders" are called "bishops" or "overseers" in Acts xx. 17, 28, and the "elders" of Titus i. 5 are spoken of as "bishops" in verse 7. Again, the "elders" are represented as those to whom the care of ruling or teaching in its fullest sense is entrusted (I Tim. v. 17; I Peter v. 1-3).

"The officers were officers not of a district but of a community. . . . All officers, whether bishops, presbyters, deacons, or readers, were originally officers of a particular community, and their status was not recognised, except by courtesy, outside that community. The idea that ordination confers not merely *status*, but *character*, and still more the idea that such character is indelible, are foreign to primitive times."¹ Dean Stanley goes even further than this in saying, "In the first beginning of Christianity there was no such institution as the clergy, and it is conceivable that there may be a time when they shall cease to be. But though the office of the Christian ministry was not one of the original and essential elements of the Christian religion, yet it grew naturally out of the want which it created."²

In reference to Acts xx. 28 the late Dean Alford wisely observed, "The Authorised Version has hardly dealt fairly in

¹ *The Growth of Church Institutions*, by E. Hatch, D.D., p. 17, 25.

² *Christian Institutions*, p. 193.

this case with the sacred text, in rendering *episcopous*, ver. 28, 'overseers,' whereas it ought there, as in all other places, to have been BISHOPS, that the fact of *elders and bishops having been originally and apostolically synonymous* might be apparent to the English reader, which now it is not." In his note on 1 Tim. iii. 1 the same writer observes, "It is merely laying a trap for misunderstanding to render the word, at this time of the Church's history, 'the office of a bishop.' The *episcopoi* (bishops) of the New Testament have officially nothing in common with our bishops. In my note on Acts xx. 17 I have stated that the English version ought to have been consistent with itself and have rendered *episcopoi* everywhere bishops, not bishops and overseers, as suited ecclesiastical prejudices. But it would be better to adopt the other alternative, and always to render *episcopoi* 'overseers.'"

Another celebrated scholar says, "The only bishops mentioned in the New Testament were simple presbyters; the same person being a 'bishop,' *episcopos*, *i.e.*, a superintendent or 'overseer,' of his congregation, as is distinctly shown by Acts xx. and other passages; and a presbyter—*presbuteros* or elder."¹

Each Church was governed by a body of elders or pastors. In course of time, as might be expected, one of the presiding brethren was looked up to as chief. Mosheim says that in the Christian assemblies during the second century "One teacher, called *overseer*, created by the common votes of the people, presided;" and that he "associated with the elders in council, who were also elected by the people, . . . assigned to each of these his employment and station." Neander says, "It is certain that every Church was governed by a union of the elders or overseers chosen from among themselves, and we find among them no individual distinguished above the rest who presided as a *primus inter pares* (first among equals);" and he adds, that "probably in the age immediately succeeding the Apostolic, of which we have unfortunately so few authentic memorials, the practice

¹ *The Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament*, by Dr. Jacob, p. 72.

was introduced of applying to such a one the name *episcopos*, by way of distinction." Gieseler, and also Bunsen, entertained similar views.

As an evidence that, in the election of elders and deacons, the earliest Churches did not ignore their own individuality, it is only necessary to quote certain phrases to prove that they took part in such elections. The word rendered ordained—*cheirotoneō*—literally signifies to vote by stretching out the hand which was done in the popular assemblies at Athens, in contradistinction to the vote by scrutiny, or the pebble used by voters elsewhere. It is worthy of observation, in connection with the history of the word, that the principal idea was sometimes dropped altogether, and extended to denote election in any manner; and even to the conferring of an office. In Acts xiv. 23 it is rendered *appointed* in the Revised Version. The same word is only met with in one other place in the New Testament, where the bearer of a letter is spoken of as "the *chosen* of the Churches" (2 Cor. viii. 19). In the Revised Version this is also rendered *appointed*. Being aware of the fact that many persons teach that the appointment in both cases was Apostolic, without any regard to the choice of the Churches, it may be well to observe that, in the last verse quoted, the words are to the effect that the bearer of the letter "*was elected by lifted hands of the Churches.*" It is evident from this that Paul, Barnabas, and members of Churches united in appointing or electing bishops or elders to official positions.

The history of human thought and action in all ages and countries is quite sufficient to prove that man will worship a God of some kind, and engage in what may be designated religious services. We also learn from the same source that the idea of propitiating an offended being, and expiating the guilt of the offender by sacrifice, has been coeval and co-extensive with the human race. In consequence of making such discoveries on the threshold of inquiry, we are not surprised to find that a priesthood has been recognised in different families, tribes, and nations from the earliest ages.

In the absence of positive information respecting the origin of sacrifices there will exist considerable diversity of opinion ; the probabilities, however, are favourable to the view that it was coeval with the Fall, and at first consisted of *olah* or a whole burnt offering merely. The clothing of the first pair, with skins of beasts by the express command of God, may be regarded as giving support to this view. That the beasts had been slain, it is quite natural to suppose, and that they had been slain with a view to sacrifice alone supplies an adequate reason.

Previous to the Law being given at Sinai, it was customary for the firstborn in every family, with those who were fathers, princes, and kings, to officiate as priests. When, however, the Lord desired that men might be more clearly taught His mind, as well as their own unfitness and inability to approach Him, one nation was selected out of all other nations, and appointed to be "a kingdom of priests," "a holy nation ;" and was regarded by Jehovah as His "peculiar treasure." And, still further, as "a royal priesthood," or "a priestly nation of royal power and glory." The Jews were consequently separated from the Egyptians and all other people, and separated to Jehovah. It must not be overlooked, however, that the election and appointment of the Israelites as "a kingdom of priests" was conditional. "If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exod. xix. 5, 6). We at once see the weakness of man, and his incapacity to enter into covenant with the Lord, when informed that the people who said, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do," shortly afterwards saying to Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear ; but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Exod. xx. 19). On the part of the people there was failure, for they stood afar off while "Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was."

In order to instruct the people still further respecting the nature of the service which Jehovah required, and to set forth

in type something still better, another step was taken in the way of selection by one tribe being chosen from the other tribes of Israel, just as the Israelites had been elected from other nations. Another selection was next made by one family being elected and appointed to the priestly office, and a still further one was had recourse to by the head of such family being set apart as high priest.

The primitive meaning of the word rendered priest is somewhat uncertain since its radical verb is not found in what remains of the Hebrew language. By some celebrated scholars it is understood to mean one who delivers a divine message, and who consequently occupied the position of a mediator between God and man. Others of equal celebrity consider reference to be made to the arranging or putting in order sacrifices or oblations. By many more the word *cohen* has been connected with an Arabic root, which signifies "draw near." From the manner in which the term priest is applied in the Old Testament, it appears that it ought to be understood in the latter sense, implying at the same time the arranging or setting in order the sacrifices offered, and the performance of whatever service might be required at the hands of those who drew near to God for the purpose of mediation.

If we are correct in our supposition respecting the meaning of the word, we must be prepared to find that the nation which was called to be "a kingdom of priests" was permitted to draw nearer to God than all other nations; that the tribe of Levi was permitted to approach still nearer than the other tribes of Israel, and that the family of Aaron would be allowed to draw nearer than all other families belonging to that tribe, and Aaron yet nearer than his sons, so long as he lived. On carefully studying the books of Moses we find such to have been the case; we therefore conclude that we must have caught the meaning of the word to some extent. Although in a measure satisfied with the results of our researches, we are not left to them for proof respecting the meaning of priesthood and its functions, for in Num. xvi. 5 we read that Moses "Spake unto Korah and unto all his

company, saying, 'Even to-morrow the Lord will show who are His, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto Him.'" Here we have "holy," "chosen," "come near," or "drawing near," spoken of. More correctly there are four characteristics of the priesthood indicated. The first is *election* by Jehovah, as distinguished both from wilful self-appointment and human authority of any kind whatever. The second is the result of such election—*belonging to Jehovah*—which means that the priest, as such, with all his life and powers, was not his own or the world's, but had given himself entirely up to the service of Jehovah. The third is that as the property of Jehovah, the priest, like everything belonging to Him, was *holy*. This, as a matter of course, involved the fourth qualification—*drawing near to Jehovah*—as the true and exclusive prerogative and duty of a priest.

It is much to be regretted that many people at the present time believe there is a priesthood in the Church of Christ apart from the High Priesthood of Christ Himself and the kingly priesthood of all believers in Him. In thus acting they transmute the simple evangelist, the herald of good news, the pastor or shepherd, into a sacrificing, sacerdotal priest. The error is committed through not recognising or understanding that the priesthood has changed. In the Epistle to the Hebrews v. 1-10 we read, "Every high priest taken from among men is ordained—appointed—for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins;" and it is added, "No man taketh this honour unto himself but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest, but He that said unto Him, 'Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee,' He is the 'Called of God,' an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec"—"a Priest for ever." Taking these verses for our guide, in connection with 1 Peter i. 5, 9, 10 and other portions of the New Testament, we learn that the grace in which all believers stand through union with Jesus is that of purged worshippers, sons of God, and priests to God. The true worshippers are those who, in the Spirit of Sonship, worship the Father. Having come to the Lord as the living

stone, individual Christians are "built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter ii. 5). The Apostle Paul keeping this truth before his mind, says, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. xii. 1). "By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Heb. xiii. 15).

"The only priests under the Gospel, designated as such in the New Testament, are the saints, the members of the Christian brotherhood."¹

If in the New Testament the Old Testament ideas of priesthood, priestly worship, and sacrifices are applied to the new economy, it is for the purpose of showing that since Christ has for ever accomplished that which they prefigured, believers are by union and communion with Him dedicated and consecrated to God, and are at the same time expected to present their lives as acceptable thank-offerings to the Most High.

The idea of the general priesthood of all believers proceeding from the consciousness of redemption, and grounded alone in that, is partly stated and developed in express terms, and also in part presupposed in the epithets, images, and comparisons applied to the Christian life. "As all believers were conscious of an equal relation to Christ as their Redeemer, and of a common participation of communion with God obtained through Him; so on this consciousness an equal relation of believers to one another was grounded, which utterly precluded any relation like that found in other forms of religion, subsisting between a priestly caste and a people of whom they were the mediators and spiritual guides. The Apostles were very far from placing themselves in a relation to believers which bore any resemblance to a mediating priesthood; in this respect they always placed themselves on a footing of equality. If Paul assured the Church of his

¹ Bishop Lightfoot, *Epistle to the Philippians*, pp. 184, 185.

intercessory prayers for them, he in return requested their prayers for himself."¹

Not even the faintest support for sacerdotalism can be found in any part of the New Testament. "In the Pastoral Epistles, for instance, which are largely occupied with questions relating to the Christian ministry, it seems scarcely possible that this aspect should have been overlooked, if it had any place in St. Paul's teaching. The Apostle discusses at length the requirements, the responsibilities, the sanctions of the ministerial office: he regards the presbyter as an example, as a teacher, as a philanthropist, as a ruler. How, then, it may well be asked, are the sacerdotal functions, the sacerdotal privileges of the office wholly set aside? If these claims were recognised by him at all, they must necessarily have taken a foremost place."²

Sacerdotalism does not find the slightest support in *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, Ignatius, Polycarp, Clement, or Justin Martyr in the middle of the second century, or in Irenæus a generation later.

Clement of Alexandria, it must be admitted, held somewhat peculiar and romantic views on the subject. Tertullian believed in it to some extent, but only in connection with the general priesthood of believers in Jesus Christ. It was not till the time of Cyprian, the Carthaginian, about the middle of the third century, that it became a recognised doctrine of the Church. When once adopted it would be sure to grow, for the heathen who had been familiar with auguries, lustrations, sacrifices, and accustomed to depend on the intervention of some priest for all the manifold rites of the State, the club, and the family, the sacerdotal functions would be extremely captivating.

We must not finish, however, until we have shown that sacerdotalism is directly opposed to the teaching of the New Testament. This will be seen if reference is made to the fact that the once purged worshippers of the present dispensation are introduced into "the sanctuary and true tabernacle which

¹ Neander's *History of the Planting of the Christian Church*.

² Bishop Lightfoot, *Philippians*, p. 245.

the Lord pitched, and not man," because Jesus is there as our great High Priest.

It is evidently too much overlooked that neither the pattern nor sphere of Christian worship can be found in the people's worship under the Law, but in that of the priest's service (Heb. viii. 4-6). It is our privilege to worship, not in the distance of the people, but in the nearness of the priests; not in the outer court, but in the temple itself, the very presence chamber of the Most High.

The Apostle Paul was a priest unto God, but not more so or in any higher sense than other believers. The diversity of the gifts of the Spirit among members of the body of Christ ought ever to be recognised, while carefully distinguished from their priestly equality.

The fearful warning given in Heb. x. 28, 29 is a warning against the fatal consequences of turning back to the old order of worship, as if it were to be the pattern of worship, instead of the contrast unto it. To do so is to reject the heavenly order for a copy of the earthly. This is the mark by which sacerdotalism distinguishes itself, it puts its priests in a place of comparative nearness to God, and the people at an unapproachable distance from Him, except through their intervention. What is this but to trample under foot the Son of God?

As the way into the Holiest has been opened by Jesus, and He is the Living Way to all His people, we may ask, why is a human intercessor thought to be necessary? What has the blood and mediation of Jesus left unaccomplished? In the shedding of it we have remission of sins. By the sprinkling of it we are pronounced clean, and sanctified. And being carried into the Holiest of all by Jesus Himself, it gives us free access into heaven itself at all times. As our High Priest abides in the presence of God, where He entered after His resurrection and ascension, He is over the house, the gates of which are always open. What remains for us to do is to enjoy our high and distinguished privileges:—"Let us draw near."

HENRY H. BOURN.

WISDOM JUSTIFIED OF HER CHILDREN.

MATT. iii. 16-19.

AN EXEGETICAL STUDY.

Authorised Version. "But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners:

But Wisdom is justified of her children."

Revised Version. "But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the marketplaces, which call unto their fellows, and say, We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not mourn. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!

And Wisdom is justified by her works."

THE first thing to be ascertained is the correct reading of the text. The chief point here is to inquire whether we are to read in the nineteenth verse *children* (τέκνων), "Wisdom is justified of her children," or *works* (ἔργων), "Wisdom is justified by her works." The Revised Version adopts in its text the latter reading, whilst it relegates the former reading to the margin with the note, "Many ancient authorities read *children* as in Luke vii. 35." The ground on which this change is justified is that ἔργων is the reading of the Codex Sinaiticus, of the Codex Vaticanus, and of some Syriac versions; it is the reading adopted by Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort. But these authorities do not appear sufficient to cause us to adopt this reading. The reading τέκνων of the *textus receptus* has the support of the vast majority of manuscripts, both uncial and cursive, and of versions, and is in accordance with the parallel passage in St. Luke's Gospel. Accordingly we consider that on this point the Revisers have erred, and we retain the reading of the Authorised Version. The reading τέκνων is that adopted by Lachmann, Alford, and Meyer.

Having settled the text, we next proceed to the exegesis or

verbal interpretation of the passage. It belongs to the parabolic teaching of Christ, wherein He illustrates the truths which He taught by incidents taken from ordinary life. Here our Lord describes the conduct of the Jews in their rejection of the Baptist and Himself as similar to the conduct of children at their games. The example selected is that of the common amusement of children imitating the practice of grown-up people. He compares the existing generation to children playing in the marketplaces, or those broad squares or piazzas which are in all Oriental towns. There are two groups of children; the one play before the other who are their audience; the first group with their pipes imitate the festivity of a marriage, and with their wailing the sorrow of a funeral: they dance and mourn; they change their deportment in order to interest and please their companions; but all to no purpose. Hence they reprove the second group of children for not responding to their merry or sorrowful strains. "We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not mourn." And as the application of this parable or similitude our Lord adds, "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. And Wisdom is justified of her children."

The ordinary explanation of this illustration, and that which suggests itself on the first reading, is that those children who piped and mourned represent John the Baptist and Jesus, whilst the refractory playmates represent the Jews of that generation who refuse to be influenced either by the warnings of the one or the loving invitations of the other. John came in the garb of mourning, neither eating nor drinking, attacking the vices of the age, calling upon men to repent, addressing them as a generation of vipers, and urging them to flee from the wrath to come. Jesus came eating and drinking, not as an ascetic like John, but mixing freely in Jewish society, attending the marriage feast at Cana, partaking of the festival which Matthew had prepared for His honour, and dining with Simon the Pharisee and Zaccheus the publican.

He came anointed with the oil of joy, and announcing the glad tidings of salvation. The wailing of the children represented the life and preaching of the Baptist; the piping of the children represented the life and preaching of Jesus. But to both the Jews turned a deaf ear; they were neither alarmed by the terrors of the law as announced by John, nor allured by the promises of the Gospel as announced by Jesus. "We (that is Jesus) piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we (that is John) wailed, and ye did not mourn." Such a meaning is supported by high authority; it is that given by Archdeacon Farrar and Godet in their commentaries.

But when the passage is more minutely examined, this does not seem to be the correct interpretation. There are at least two objections against it. First, it is to be observed that it is the same children who are sitting in the marketplaces that find fault with their fellows for neither dancing to their music nor lamenting at their mourning. "Whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the marketplaces which call to their fellows." Now those children represent the refractory Jews of that generation to whom John and Jesus are opposed; so that John and Jesus must represent the other group of children. And, secondly, if we were to suppose that John and Jesus represented the children who piped and wailed, then the order must be reversed to correspond with what follows; it would require to be, "We wailed unto you, and ye did not mourn; we piped, and ye did not dance. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, and a friend of publicans and sinners." For these reasons we must reverse the meaning. The group of children who piped and wailed are the refractory Jews, and the other group of children who would not listen, are John and Jesus. John came neither eating nor drinking; he dwelt in the wilderness, was clothed with camel's hair, and his food was locusts and wild honey; and the free-living Jews were offended at his asceticism. The Son of Man came eating and drinking; he traversed the cities of Galilee, he freely

mingled with human society, He was not an ascetic like the Baptist, nor did He fast as the Pharisees ; and the ascetic and self-righteous Jews were offended at His freedom. The former did not dance to their music, and the latter did not respond to their lamentations. Such is the interpretation adopted by Meyer, De Wette, and Alford.

The last clause rendered in the Authorised Version, "But Wisdom is justified of her children," is not to be considered as the words of the Jews, but as the inference drawn by Christ Himself from the preceding statement ; that although the present generation rejected the preaching of John and Jesus, yet Wisdom is justified of her children. The sentence is introduced by the usual copula *and*, as in the Revised Version, in the sense of nevertheless. By *Wisdom* here is meant not precisely Christ Himself, who is indeed the true Wisdom of God, the manifestation of the Divine perfections, but the Divine Wisdom as displayed in the ministries of John and our Lord—the Wisdom of God as seen in their respective teachings. The word is probably used with reference to its frequent personification in the Book of Proverbs. "Wisdom crieth without ; she uttereth her voice in the streets. She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates ; in the city she uttereth her words, saying, Turn ye at My reproof ; behold I will pour out My Spirit unto you, I will make known My words unto you." And, again, "Doth not Wisdom cry, and understanding put forth her voice ? She standeth in the top of the high places, by the way in the places of the paths ; she crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors : Unto you, O men, I call, and My voice is unto the sons of men." Wisdom, then, is here used for God, especially for the manifestation of His purpose in the revelation of mercy and grace made by John and Jesus, according to the variety of forms which that revelation assumed.

The word *justified* is always used in the New Testament in the sense of a declaration or manifestation of righteousness. When, then, it is said that Wisdom is justified of her children, it is meant that it is shown to be the true Wisdom, proved or

declared to be right. Thus in the corresponding passage in St. Luke's Gospel it is said that "The publicans justified God being baptised with the baptism of John ; but the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves being not baptised by him ;" that is, whilst the Pharisees rejected John and his teaching, the publicans, by believing on him and submitting to his teaching, justified God—declared their conviction in the Divine nature of his mission. Thus, then, the children of Wisdom justified her, declared or made known her truth. The words are not to be taken ironically on the supposition that by the children of Wisdom are meant the Jews in the sense : "Is this the way that you justify Wisdom?" Or, as Calvin puts it, still restricting Wisdom's children to the Jews, "Wisdom, however wickedly she may be slandered by her own sons, loses nothing of her worth or rank, but remains unimpaired. The Jews, and particularly the Scribes, gave themselves out as children of the Wisdom of God ; and yet, when they trod their mother under their feet, they not only flattered themselves amidst such heinous sacrilege, but desired that Christ should fall by their decision. Christ maintains, on the contrary, that however wicked and depraved her children may be, Wisdom remains entire, and that the malice of those who wickedly and malignantly slander her takes nothing from her authority."

It is somewhat difficult to give in the translation the full force to the preposition *ἀπὸ*, rendered in the Authorised Version *of*, and in the Revised Version *by*. The Revised Version, whilst in this passage it translates *ἀπὸ* *by*, in the corresponding passage in St. Luke's Gospel renders it *of*. The correct rendering appears to be neither *of* nor *by*, but *from* : "And Wisdom is justified from her children" ; she receives her justification from them. Alford observes, "*ἀπὸ* is not exactly equivalent to *ὑπό*, but implies 'at the hands of' the person whence the justification comes." The justifiers of Wisdom are her children ; from them, in opposition to the men of this generation, she receives her justification. This may denote either that from the holy conduct and blameless lives of her children Wisdom is justified, proved to be Divine ; or that

these children testify to the truth and correctness of Wisdom, approve her doings in their minds and conscience ; Wisdom is justified, is declared to be true from the testimony or convictions of her children. Wisdom is thus justified from her children, both passively and actively ; passively, from the holiness of their conduct, and actively, from their testimony to its truth.

By the *children* of Wisdom are meant those who reverence and obey her, who, having embraced her and followed her guidance, have proved how unwarranted are the judgments of the men of that generation. Some critics identify the children of Wisdom with the men of that generation, because the Jews boasted of their peculiar privileges as the children of God ; but this would render the meaning of the words confused. Godet supposes that Wisdom's children are they of that generation who have embraced the truth. "The preposition *ἀπὸ*," he observes, "indicates that God's justification is derived from these same men—the generation above mentioned—that is to say, from their repentance on hearing the reproof and threatenings of John, and from their faith resembling a joyous amen to the promises of Jesus." But it is evident that the children of Wisdom are opposed to the generation of the refractory Jews ; these rejected the teaching of John and Christ, whereas those justified it by being convinced of the truth. The children of Wisdom are the same as those who are said a few verses before to take the kingdom of heaven by violence ; in other words, they are the true disciples of Christ.

Such, then, is the general interpretation of the passage. The Jews are the children in the marketplaces who pipe and wail, and John and Jesus the children who will not respond ; but notwithstanding the rejection of those Divine teachers by the men of that generation, Wisdom or the revelation of God is embraced by those who are the children of God. Thus, then, different judgments are passed on the ways of Divine Wisdom, rejected by some and embraced by others. The Gospel salvation is termed the Wisdom of God, being an instance of the Divine contrivance for the supply of our

spiritual wants ; but it is a Wisdom which is concealed from the world, and revealed only to the children of God : "We speak Wisdom," says St. Paul, "among them that are perfect, yet not the Wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, which come to nought ; but we speak the Wisdom of God in a mystery, ever the hidden Wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Which none of the princes of the world knew." This Wisdom of God, as revealed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is very differently regarded by the world and by the children of God. The world see no wisdom in it ; there is no adaptation in it to their worldly views and feelings ; it will neither adapt itself to their joys or sorrows : "We piped unto you, and ye did not dance ; we wailed, and ye did not mourn" ; whereas the children of God discovered in it the perfection of Divine Wisdom.

In order to understand and appreciate the Wisdom of God in the Gospel salvation, there must be a correspondence between our disposition and the declarations made ; in other words, we must have a religious spirit ; we must be the children of Wisdom. It is only the spiritually minded that can understand spiritual truth. There must be a sympathy between our feelings and the contents of revelation. "The natural man," says the Apostle, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." Nor is this a peculiarity which applies only to the Gospel of God, it is true of all works in literature, science, and art ; namely, that our disposition or attainments must bear a correspondence to the work which we study in order to a full comprehension and appreciation of its meaning. The finest works of poetry, the most glowing descriptions, the dramas of Shakespeare, and the poems of Browning and Tennyson, would be entirely lost upon a man whose imagination is feeble, or who is destitute of a poetic spirit. There must be a Shakespeare within us before we can appreciate the Shakespeare without us. The profoundest researches in metaphysics, the unravelling of the mysteries of the human mind, the

systems of Kant, or Hegel, or Schelling, would be unintelligible to one who regards metaphysics as useless jargon. The highest forms of mathematical research, the calculation of eclipses, the motions of the planetary systems, and the measuring of the distances of the fixed stars, the *Principia* of Newton, or the *Système du Monde* of Laplace, could not possibly be understood by one who is destitute of mathematical culture. The loveliest paintings, the great masterpieces of Raphael and Titian, could neither be relished nor appreciated by one destitute of an artistic spirit. The grandest performances of music, the most pleasing harmonies of sound, the works of Handel, Mozart, Mendelssohn, and Beethoven, would seem but as discord, and be the cause of annoyance to one who has no ear for music. And so, in like manner, the announcements of revelation, the declaration of God's infinite love in the gift of His Son, the way of salvation through a crucified Redeemer, the manifestation of Divine mercy and grace in the Gospel, that masterpiece of infinite Wisdom, could not possibly be understood by the carnal mind, or by one who is destitute of spiritual aspirations. As it was with the Saviour in the days of His flesh, so is it with respect to His Gospel—men see no beauty in it that they should desire it; there is no response in it to their worldly feelings.

Certainly one great cause of the false judgments of worldly men on the Gospel salvation—of men who are celebrated for the acuteness of their judgment and for the clearness of their perception—arises from their indifference to it. They have not applied their mind to it; they have not made it the object of definite study and research; religion has no great hold over them; they are not alive to its momentous realities and solemn responsibilities; they are like those children of whom our Lord speaks sitting in the market-places, in a state of spiritual indolence, and playing with the great realities of a future life; they have eyes, but they refuse to look; they have ears, but they refuse to hear. And thus it is that the religious disposition, the God-consciousness as the Germans call it, which is in every man, is neither called forth nor cultivated, but lies dormant in the human soul. It is one

of those latent faculties of the mind which unfortunately remains latent ; as when a man cannot read a letter, because he has never learned to write.

But, over and above this indifference, there is a positive aversion in many to the Gospel. The holy demands of the Gospel, the spiritual life which it requires, is opposed to the corrupt inclinations of the heart. The humbling nature of the Gospel salvation which deprives men of all ground of boasting, and makes them entirely dependent on the merits of another, is extremely painful to human pride ; and the exaltation of faith in disclosures which reason could not make, and which are beyond the sphere of the human intellect, as the instrument of our salvation, is an offence to those who pride themselves on the sufficiency of human reason.

But whilst the Wisdom of God is thus condemned by the men of this generation as equally unsuitable for the season of their joys, " We piped unto you, and ye did not dance," and for the season of their sorrows, " We wailed, and ye did not mourn," yet it is justified and fully approved by those who are her children. To them spiritual senses are imparted ; their blind eyes are opened to behold the glories of God's grace, and their deaf ears are unstopped to listen to the wonders of the Gospel. They possess a corresponding disposition ; there is a sympathy between their feelings and the contents of revelation. Whilst the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ; he that is spiritual judgeth all things. The Spirit of Christ within them causes them to understand the revelation of Christ without them ; the internal revelation answers to the external ; and whereas there was discord between the men of our Lord's generation and the teachings of John and Jesus, here there is concord ; the mind of the children of Wisdom is in correspondence with the variety displayed in revelation ; and thus they mourn when in the spirit of the Baptist they are called to repent, and they rejoice when in the spirit of Jesus they are called to embrace the great and precious promises of the Gospel. They are no longer actuated by that carnal mind which is enmity against God, but by that spiritual mind which is life

and peace ; they are inspired by a love of the truth, and are thus freed from those prejudices which formerly enwrapped their judgments. Thus Wisdom is justified from her children ; receives its justification from their approbation.

Another interpretation has been suggested which is fresh, and, so far as is known, has not been adopted by any commentator, but which is certainly not on that account to be rejected. According to this interpretation, the children of Wisdom are opposed to the children sitting in the market-places. All these children, both those who pipe and mourn, and those who refuse to respond, who will neither dance to the music nor weep to the wailing, represent the Jews of that generation. They are engaged in childish pursuits of amusement, and show among themselves disagreement, discontent, and petulance. And this, it is said, is especially evident from the parallel passage in Luke's Gospel, where the words are, "Whereunto shall I liken the men of this generation, and to what are they like? They are like to children sitting in the marketplace, and calling to one another;" thus showing that the two groups of children belong to the men of that generation whom our Lord condemns. Now with these children the children of Wisdom are contrasted. Wisdom, condemned by the men of that generation, is justified by her children. These children are those mentioned above, to whom the men of that generation are opposed, namely, John and Jesus. Both of these are pre-eminently the children of Wisdom, and both, in their very different ministries, have borne testimony to Wisdom ; John by his call to repentance and preparation, and Jesus by His announcement of the Kingdom of God. Although the world rejected the counsel of God, although they looked upon John as possessed with a devil, and Jesus as a gluttonous man and a winebibber, yet both John and Jesus have fully justified the Wisdom of God, demonstrated its truth, in opposition to the cavils of the Pharisees and the indifference of the multitude. The above explanation is ingenious, but its ingenuity is no argument against its acceptance.

PATON J. GLOAG.

NATURE'S ALLEGED CRIMINALITY.

THE late Mr. J. S. Mill denounced nature as "a monster of criminality, without justice and without mercy." His dictum has passed almost into a proverb among atheists, as denying any moral character in the Author of nature, and implying that He must be either a mere fiend or wholly indifferent to moral consequences. Now, if it can be shown that, so far from that conclusion following, the alleged indifference in the operation of physical laws is an important condition for the preservation of the moral order, a greater weight, although in the opposite scale to that which many suppose, will accrue to the dictum of the distinguished philosopher.

In order, then, to test the consequences of the physical system as we find it, I will adopt a method as old as Euclid, and assume a system the very opposite, and see what consequences must then follow. What, then, are the conceivable aspects of a system opposite to that which we find? I think there are two, and that they exhaust the practical issues of the case. We may conceive, first, a system in which no destructive or noxious agencies should exist at all; and second, one in which those agencies should be so adjusted and contrived as to single out for their victims the morally delinquent only. As things stand, fire, earthquake, flood, avalanche, storm, and famine come alike, it is alleged, "on the evil and on the good," and descend, even as the bounties of nature, "on the just and on the unjust." I will assume it to be so, and proceed to discuss the above-suggested alternatives.

Those who claim a course of nature from which all destructive agencies should be excluded in favour of perfect security for man, are in effect contending that a creature confessedly not only imperfect, but depraved, should have perfect surroundings. For the depravity of man, account for it as we will, is an undoubted fact of scientific observation. I need not quote universal history in support of this now, as I shall have perhaps something to urge in detail on this behalf here-

after. But some may perhaps think they can find an answer to this in the fact that while man's depravity is moral, the antagonisms of his environment are purely physical. But in arguing this question we must take the whole of man's nature, not either half as suits the censor's purpose. The very terms of the above indictment show the shallowness of the attempted answer. Criminality, justice, and mercy are all of them moral terms, and, apart from a moral theory, have no meaning. Purely physical, therefore, as those antagonisms are, they must be regarded as capable of subserving a moral purpose, or *cadet quæstio*. The whole point of the censor's objection lies in urging upon nature a moral standard, and condemning her for not recognising it.

I submit, on the contrary, that if man were morally upright and finitely perfect, then a course of nature which exactly reflected his moral perfections and embodied a corresponding standard in its workings would be a suitable environment for him. On the contrary, being as he is, it is unscientific, or, more shortly, absurd, to claim such an environment for such a being. But are storms, volcanoes, earthquakes, mere mistakes in the physical economy? I believe they are recognised as having their uses and serving valuable, probably indispensable, ends in that economy. The properties of bodies and the laws of matter and force being as they are, will any one sketch a design of a working model for our globe in which they could have been excluded? We may, of course, conceive abstractly of their exclusion, but that may probably be because we do not realize what in fact the conditions or consequences of such exclusion would be, nor see really to the bottom of the physical problem. Agreed then, that, as an abstract conception, the world might have been conceivably better suited for man's physical security—*i.e.*, might have contained no force which would have overmatched human power to subdue it; yet as no one, I imagine, is prepared to show how the machine, so to speak, could under those conditions have been worked, so no one can prove any right in man to demand a world in which water should not drown, nor sunstrokes and other severities of weather injure health

and destroy life. In short, it is evident that the objection may, and to be consistent must, be pushed to a point at which the entire course of nature would need to be subverted. Nor do I think that any more complete proof of the practical absurdity of such objections than this can be given.

On the other hand, it is proper to notice that men, as a rule, build on a security of exemption, each in his own case, which experience does not warrant. They neglect obvious warnings, court wholesale destruction, back their individual powers of endurance against the tremendous forces with which nature is charged, in spite of the gathered lessons of centuries. The further science advances, the more recklessly presumptuous are the risks encountered. I do not mean that the individuals who suffer are always wholly or chiefly responsible; but the organization of human society which requires these risks and enjoys the results when they are escaped, is responsible for them. As an example, ocean passenger-ships now are expected to perform their transit, as a rule, against time to the day and hour. This not only emboldens navigators to shrink from no stress of weather, but, since such despatch can only be attained by the straightest lines between port and port, drives all the competing members of a crowded sea-service to choose virtually the same track, and in effect converts the spacious ocean into a narrow and densely thronged water-way full of snares for mutual destruction. As a more blameworthy instance, it was stated publicly, and I believe never contradicted, that premonitory signs of the terrible earthquake which convulsed Ischia some few summers ago were given in the sudden rise of temperature in the wells, and other like tokens; but that the warnings were suppressed for fear the visitors to that favourite health-resort should suddenly migrate. These and similar facts with which one might fill a volume show how vastly the destructive agencies of nature are multiplied by human presumption or wilful blindness. Men must discover for themselves the laws of nature in order to appreciate their force, and, when discovered, must be willing to submit to their teachings. The construction of theatres, the warming, lighting, and ventilation

of churches and other public interiors, belong to a realm of man's own creation, and we know, from repeated lessons of terror, how signal has been the violation of acknowledged principles. With such results in that self-created realm it is well that man's control over the forces of nature is so far limited as we see it is. With every extension of that control he seems to give a more audacious challenge to all that lies on the brink of the line of safety.

In saying that man must be held responsible for these results I do not mean that blame necessarily or always attaches. Even where it demonstrably does attach, very different degrees of censure are admissible in different cases. On the other hand, if there was no natural theatre of peril there could be no natural school of hardihood and courage. To whatever extent these virtues are prized we must exempt from censure any natural machinery which tends to produce them. The school of Arctic navigation, for example, furnishes a standard of heroism to every nation which has recruited it, and tends to raise the moral ideal of millions by the gallant and skilful daring of a few in the interests of science. Until such moral qualities have lost the homage of mankind we must cease to rail at the elemental surroundings which form their special training. For it is surely better that calm and skilful courage, energetic patience, hardy endurance, and self-restraint should be learned from the baffling hardships of the Polar seas than amid scenes of mutual bloodshed and the teachings of scientific carnage. And save in these two opposite ways, viz., by the terrors of nature and the terrors of war, there seem no means of cultivating them. If nature "knows neither justice nor mercy," she at any rate knows something of the hardier virtues, so far as sympathizing with those whom she trains. She yields up to them alone her secrets, and makes them her messengers of discovery to their fellow-men.

“‘ Would'st thou,' so the helmsman answer'd,
‘ Learn the secret of the sea ?
Only those who brave its dangers
Understand its mystery.’”

And what is true of the mariner is true of the mountaineer, the desert traveller, the miner, and the aëronaut.

Dismissing, then, the project of nature in which there should be no noxious agencies, let us consider that of nature in which all these should be on the side of moral goodness, *i.e.*, sparing in every case of loss, damage, disaster, and violent death the upright, pure, and merciful. I contend that this, so far from being conducive to human virtue, would be detrimental, and in many cases fatal, to it. If a well-meaning clergyman bribes his parishioners to attend church, and succeeds in finding a bribe to suit each taste, that man's action goes far to make sincere religion impossible. He would be doing what in him lay to uproot it. The freak of that individual would be condemned by the common sense of mankind, to say nothing of the force of sarcasm and ridicule. But the freak or craze of the individual at its worst would be mischievous only during his life. But if the bribe to be upright, pure, and merciful lay in nature's hand, it would be ubiquitous, and would therefore be in operation universal and in permanency unalterable. In seeming to secure the results of virtue this would tend to the destruction of the qualities which produce it. For human actions being moralized by their motives, the dominant motive, especially amidst a race so far already tainted by selfishness as mankind, would tend to become a selfish craving for personal exemption from loss, damage, disaster, and violent death; this working everywhere, in generation after generation of men, must inevitably result in stamping out all virtuous principle among them. A few noble souls would perhaps escape the servility of character born of ever-present and immediate reward for virtuous deeds. The fear of punishment certain to be instant might in exceptionally generous beings fail to be the ruling motive. But the common run of men would, unless the reward were future and unseen, never rise to a state of virtue worthy the name of habit or character. Man is noble enough to be virtuous for virtue's sake, but this high motive cannot, as a rule, hold its own against the bribe of immediate reward. The motive most constantly present would be the one most constantly acted

on, and, by being so acted on, must needs mould the character ultimately on itself. And just as men by doing virtuous acts beget in themselves a habit of virtue which consolidates into character; so by tending to make every act a selfish act, nearly all men must inevitably grow selfish at the core, and from the core to the husk—must minimize, and at last extinguish, all other motives. We should all be externally presentable personages after one model. Everywhere the same decency without and the same rottenness within; the same drop-down to the dead-level of self-seeking, at which no self-sacrifice nor grand emotions would be possible. We should be incapable even of the homage which in hypocrisy vice pays to virtue; for there would and could be no hypocrisy possible in the matter. Every one would know his own motives and his neighbour's, and each would appraise the others as all working for wages punctually paid in a premium of insurance against loss, damage, disaster, and violent death.

Let me refer to the grand apologue of the Book of Job. I am not now quoting it as of inspired authority (this being an argument rather *ad infideles*), but merely as true to the great principles of human nature. Remember the taunt of the enemy (Job i. 9, 10), "Doth Job serve God for naught? Hast not thou made an hedge about him?" Under the conditions I am supposing that taunt would everywhere tend to realize itself. Not only human goodness, even up to the level at which we now see it, but even a belief in the possibility of it would have become impossible, would have been dead and buried, and its bare tradition extinct long ere this. Even mere benevolence would probably have disappeared. Acting on nature's training, men would have learned to exact a *quid pro quo* all round. Every man would have his price, and expect it openly, and take it without shame. The bribed dependents of nature to begin with, we should all long ago have established the custom of universal "backsheesh." Consider how long it takes to establish in any nation a comparative purity of political election and banish corruption from official life. Imagine what the result would have been if, in every stage of universal

society from the cradle to the grave, nature had stood over us like a hundred-handed Briareus, with a bribe in every hand, ostensibly to promote justice, purity, and mercy, but in reality to poison them. The very words would have lost all meaning for us long ago. Moral sense itself would have died out in the universal stagnation of this cataclysm of selfishness. Some may think my words savour of exaggeration. I humbly believe that no exaggeration on such a subject is possible.

Remember, on the other hand, the noble words of Gray in his "Ode to Adversity" :

"When first thy Sire to send on earth
Virtue, his darling child, designed,
To thee he gave the heavenly birth,
And bade to form her infant mind.
Stern, rugged nurse, thy rigid lore
With patience many a year she bore."

The poet is true to the common sense of mankind. But take an instance. A lifeboat is putting off to the rescue of a perishing crew. What is it which fires us with admiration of the action and stamps it as heroic? The fact that life is risked to save life. If any case is imaginable in which nature, supposed converted, on the model of J. S. Mill, to virtuous ways, might be expected to show "bowels of mercies," it is surely in such a case as this. But the "monster of criminality," instead of "doing," like Ariel, "her spiriting gently," overwhelms them, let us suppose, in the waves with no more concern than if they were a gang of pirates or the crew of a slave-ship, and Mr. Mill's case against her is established! Be it so. But if it were not for the catastrophe being possible, and perhaps probable, where would be the heroism of the act? It all lies in the self-oblivion of uncalculating pity for human misery. Ensure your lifeboat's crew a safe passage with a return ticket, like so many "Cook's tourists," and the whole idea is not so much extinguished as turned upside down. On Mr. Mill's implied theory they ought not even to encounter wet jackets. There must be nowhere extant that which by the common consent of man forms the supreme test and sole possible proof of virtue. And with

the possibility of proof would disappear the possibility of the thing proven. Juvenal long ago complained of his degenerate Romans :

“ Quis enim virtutem ampelectitur ipsam,
Præmia si tollas ? ”¹

But the distinction which his words imply must have been effaced for ages before he appeared on the moral scene. In “ embracing virtue ” men would have embraced the “ rewards.” The two would have become identical ; not merely inseparable, but indistinguishable, even to the moral microscope of such a purist as the late Mr. Mill. Morality would have become a tree rotten from root to twig, and with Dead-Sea apples for its fruit.

It remains, then, that, as man is actually constituted, you cannot have nature “ moral ” in Mr. Mill’s sense of the word, and man moral too. You may choose in theory between the two, and Mr. Mill seems to me disposed to choose the former. I would not willingly do any injustice to the dead, but if his words have any meaning, that is what they seem to postulate. In practice let us be thankful that all such choice is out of our reach. The Author of nature has chosen in favour of man—man whom we believe, holding as we do to an old-fashioned authority, to be “ made in His image, after His likeness.” Man was made for morality, and brute nature, so far as they have relations in common, for man ; and therefore nature continues brute, that man may be exalted and established over it in his moral supremacy. Once impregnate “ nature ” with sympathies for justice, purity, and mercy, and that moment in man they become abortive instincts. Just as true religion flourishes in greatest sincerity under the bracing influence of adversity, so true morality seems to require this persecution, if I may so phrase it, of nature in the physical sphere to ensure its genuineness. And thus we by admitting, nay, establishing, the monstrously “ criminal ” character of nature, succeed in finding the only basis of harmony at once for nature, man, and God—on the part of nature, in her service to man, since

¹ “ For who embraces virtue by herself, if you take away the rewards ? ”

to keep him in unalloyed sincerity to the moral principle is surely the greatest service she could render him ; on the part of man, in his homage to that principle, as the governing one of his entire being ; on the part of God, as the Author of both, who has set man over nature, but His own law of immutable morality over man.

But some one, not of Mr. Mill's school, may advance a plea for Divine interposition : Why should not God, having set these limits, confessedly necessary for all ordinary purposes, interpose in extreme cases to shield the relatively guiltless from the awful horrors of such sufferings as we see they share ? To this I have two brief answers :

1. If you and I, my brother, were to attempt to regulate interpositions and decree their occasions, I fear we should make wild work of it, and mar more than we might mend. If we believe in a God, let us be content to leave that among His "secret things," and not lose faith in Him because He does not come at our beckoning.

2. Furthermore, how do you know that He does *not* interpose ? I do not mean on all such occasions as *we* might deem to require it, but on such as seem good to Himself. Human history, as it is marked with scenes of dreadful havoc wrought by nature's hand, so it is studded here and there with wonderful deliverances. We cannot tell *when* He interposes ; and if we knew that, we should next want to know *how* and *why*. In short, we should be seeking an admission behind the scenes of His providence, whereas our proper position at present is in front of them. I, indeed, incline to believe that we, while in these perishable bodies, have no faculties sufficient to understand either the when, the how, or the why—I mean by any broad gate of general intelligence. But whether the hitch is there or on the moral side—that is to say, that practically such knowledge would harm us—is unsearchable at present. If you think you are either immortal or capable of immortality, can you not afford to wait a little ; and seeing how, in general, man and nature work together in harmony, take the rest on trust, till you can know more and be safe in knowing it ?

HENRY HAYMAN.

JESUS, SON OF SIRACH.

THE period between the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity and the advent of Christ is almost a blank in the history of the chosen people, in so far as the operation of the internal forces in the development of the kingdom of God are concerned. Josephus has indeed procured for us a few clear spots in that gloomy and cloudy horizon, but how imperfect they are may be seen from the fact that he does not even mention Jesus, son of Sirach, one of the most important of the Apocryphal writers, from whom we get the clearest view of the religious, moral, and educational condition of the people at that time when the voice of prophecy had long been silent, the canon of the Old Testament closed, and neither the New Testament nor the Talmud had yet appeared. Nor does the Talmud give us information about this author, and when it refers to his book as one of the "external or non-canonical," it blunders as in Kethuboth, 110 b, where the quoted passage is not found in his book, but in Prov. xv. 15.¹ All, then, that we know of him is from his own book, in which we may see a picture of himself and of his time. He was a native of Jerusalem, who had inherited his own name and his book from his grandfather. The elder Jesus was one of those Hebrew philosophers or gnostic poets who, in imitation of Solomon, were propagating truth of profoundest wisdom in beautifully expressed language and aphorisms so as to impress them better on the memory. The spirit of wisdom, if not of prophecy, was through them crying in the wilderness and preparing the way of the Lord.

¹ It is not clear in the Talmud, to which book Ben Sira the Rabbi refers. There is a book in Hebrew and Syriac, a collection of moral sentences ascribed to the same author. There is a tradition that Ben Sira was supernaturally conceived (see Zemach David, p. 19). It is probably to this Ben Sira that the passage in Sanhedrin, p. 100 b, refers, which is adduced as a reason for not allowing to read the book, "Thou shall not take off the skin from the ear of a fish," although it is not found in the copy extant.

We do not know whether Sirach was also an author, but he was evidently a pious man, and trained his son in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, so that from his childhood he had a craving for learning.

"Since my tenderest youth," says he, "I have searched for wisdom; and to my last day it shall be the object of my most ardent desires." One day he discovered his grandfather's Hebrew manuscript containing sapient sentences. After digesting its contents and adding to it, he took it to Alexandria, where he translated it into Greek. What efforts did he not make to propagate among the masses of the people that wisdom which flows from the Divine Source? But he did not offer them dry and abstruse speculations, for he sneers at worldly philosophy by calling it "exquisite subtlety" (chap. xx. 25). What prayer did he not address to God that he might obtain the gifts of intelligence and inward illumination? And in his prayers he, as it were, anticipates New Testament teaching. He addresses God by the endearing title of Father, and he says that men "should not faint when they pray."

Another feature of the national characteristic which now began to make itself manifest is travelling and commerce. He had seen the world, was acquainted with diverse nations, and with all sorts of practices of men. "A man that hath travelled," says he, "knoweth many things; and he that hath much experience will declare wisdom. He that hath no experience knoweth little, but he that hath travelled is full of prudence. When I travelled I saw many things; and I understand more than I can express" (chap. xxxiv. 9-11). He wants his people to be honourable merchants, if they are compelled to lay aside their agricultural calling. "As a nail sticketh fast between joinings of the stones, so doth sin stick between buying and selling. A pucker shall not be freed from sin. Lay up thy treasure according to the commandments of the Most High, and it shall bring thee more profit than gold." He exalts the office of a physician and of the apothecary to a high degree; speaks of the pleasure of music and feasts; enjoins temperance, almsgiving, carefulness in taking an oath, avoiding quarrels and revenge, forgiveness of

injuries, that in order when we pray we may be forgiven ; diligent study of the ancient writings, and meditation upon prophecy. All this contains roots from the Old Testament, and germs of the New. It is a pleasant picture presented on the pedestal of this book, and we have no doubt that our Lord looked at it. It is probable that He re-echoed and amplified every good and noble precept in the Sermon on the Mount, and corrected what was wrong in it (comp. Matt. v. 43, 44), "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies," &c., with what Jesus, son of Sirach, says in Ecc. xii. 5, "Do well unto him that is lowly, but give not to the ungodly ; hold back thy bread, and give it not unto him" (comp. also Luke xii. 16-21 with Ecc. xl. 19).

We see in him a high degree of civilisation and culture, and much that is really admirable ; but he also represents some of the features of the later Scribes and Pharisees. He teaches in chap. iii. 31 that alms makes an atonement for sin, unless the English rendering of עֲרִיקָה by alms is wrong, which, together with Prov. x. 2 and Ps. cxii. 9, were afterwards made the ground of the dogma of merit by almsgiving.

Then again, we find him exalting the literate class at the expense of the farmer and the artizan, as if the two together were incompatible, which was quite a feature in mediæval Judaism. "The man," He says, "that ploughs the field and whose talk is of bullocks, the carpenter and the architect who spend their lives in building, the engraver whose whole attention is concentrated upon his image, the blacksmith who strikes on the anvil, and the potter who turns the wheel—all these are very expert and skilful in their trades ; yet do not elevate the community amongst whom they live, nor teach in courts of justice ; they have no knowledge of right, and do not understand the moral precepts and maxims." He is also a great patriot, and does not show us that his travels in foreign lands and his contact with other nations, especially with the Greeks, have at all modified his national views and aspirations. It is in his book that we find for the first time the theological term of elect ascribed to the Jews. His admiration for the priests

and the ritual of the temple knows no bounds. When speaking of them his imagination is aglow, his prayers become fervent, and his eulogies are coloured with beautiful practical figures. Simon the high priest he calls "the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and the moon at the full, as the flower of roses in the spring, as a young cedar in Libanus." "He stretched out his hand to the cup and poured out the blood of the grape at the foot of the altar" (chap l. 15), an expression which occurs in patristic writings, and which, alas! was taken in literal sense, and gave rise to so much controversy on the subject of the Lord's Supper. Such is the picture which the son of Sirach presents to us of a wise man of his time, of one who, in reference to Christianity, may be compared to the Reformers before the time of the Reformation.

Joshua was yet young when he was accused by some infamous and envious man of the crime of high treason before the King. In vain did he appeal to the friendship of the most influential men; no one would or dared to plead his innocence, and so he was condemned to perish at the stake. He sought his safety in flight, and for a long time, during which he was a wandering fugitive, he devised various means for evading the pursuit of his enemies. It appears that by a miracle he escaped death; so he ends his book with a song of praise to God for having so paternally watched over him and preserving his life in order that he may teach and edify his brethren, and his last words to them are, "Work your work betimes, and in His time He will give you your reward."

We will now briefly review the book as a whole.—1. Its history. 2. Its most important doctrine with regard to Christianity. The book of Jesus, son of Sirach, is said to have been written by him about the year 132 B.C. According to Jerome, who saw its original Hebrew text, it was called ספר משלים "Book of Proverbs." In the Greek translation it is known by the name of "The Wisdom of the Son of Sirach." The ancients called it "The Treasure of all Virtue." The Church calls it "Ecclesiasticus," and declared it in the Councils of Carthage, Rome, and Trent as canonical. But as these Councils were not universal, Protestants do not consider them-

selves bound by their decrees. The Greek Church, too, did not fully acknowledge its canonicity before 1672 A.D.

Now with regard to the doctrine or theology of this book. No careful reader can charge the author with either mystic or Platonic views. His teaching is serene, practical, and spiritual, and bears the impress of the Hebrew mind which imbibed the teachings of Moses and the prophets. But there are two sublime words with him upon which the whole Bible hinges as upon a pivot, and these are, the wisdom of God, and the law of God. The word wisdom in itself is capable in Hebrew of various abstract significations. But in what sense did our author understand the expression חכמת אלהים, which occurs first in Dan. v. 11? It is evident that the wisdom of which he speaks in the first chapter is primordial, uncreated wisdom, as coexistent with God, and describing His Divine perfection. He desires to teach wisdom to his people, and his first care is to direct them to its Eternal Source. "All wisdom comes from God; in Him it was from all eternity; all created works bear its impress, particularly man, the chief work of the creation." It is true that he says, "Wisdom has been created before all things," but his meaning is the same as the Apostle's in Col. i. 15, "the first-born of every creature;" and in Rev. iii. 14, where the ascended Lord speaks of Himself as "the beginning of the creation of God." It is evident that in all these passages the doctrine of the pre-existence of the Logos is taught. But that which was with God before every created being is essentially Divine. He bases, of course, this teaching concerning the wisdom of God on Prov. viii. 22, 31. And it is necessary to see that both in the Proverbs of Solomon and in this book there is a distinction between wisdom as a personification and wisdom as a personality, as there are some who deprecate our applying Prov. viii. 22 to Christ, because in the first chapter Wisdom says, "I also will laugh at your calamity," and this language is supposed to be contrary to the character of a loving Saviour.¹ Now, wisdom personified is the product of wisdom as

¹ See the *Expositor* for September, 1888.

a personality. It stands to the other in the same relation as effect to cause. The effect of wisdom is the accumulated intelligence and experience of mankind, or, as we should say, public opinion. This is personified in the first chapter of Proverbs, &c., and also in chap. xxiv. of this book, where Joshua represents the חכמה as seated in the midst of the assembly, and making a sublime monologue its own eulogy, He compares its strength and beauty to the cedars of Lebanon, to the cypress of Hermon, to the palm of Eingeddi, and to the rose of Jericho. But what does he mean by Divine wisdom when he lays aside poetry and speaks plain prose? He says that it proceeded uncreated from the mouth of the Most High, and he identifies it with the Word of God, chap. i, 5, and then again in chap. xxiv. with "the covenant of the Most High, even the law which Moses commanded for an heritage unto the congregations of Jacob." The same is taught in the Zohar.

הקבה ואורייתא כלא חד

The Holy One, blessed be He, and the Law are one. It would take more space than a brief article can afford to show from the Talmud and the Midrash, as well as from many Rabbinical Commentaries, that the doctrine of the pre-existence of the Messiah, whether under the name of Wisdom, Word, Lord, Place, in which all the souls were created, or Shechinah, is an ancient Jewish one, and was not borrowed from the Greeks. For did they not read in their own Scriptures, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth"? (Ps. xxxiii. 6). Again, "The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth" (Prov. iii. 20). Therefore John i. 1 is in full harmony with all Old Testament teaching. But the Christian doctrine has still a higher basis than even these passages to rest upon. It rests on the declaration of Christ Himself. He claimed to be the pre-existent Wisdom of God (comp. Luke xi. 49, "The Wisdom of God said, I will send them prophets," &c., with Matt. xxiii. 34, "Wherefore, behold I send unto you prophets," &c.). Above all, He said, "I and the Father are One."

AARON BERNSTEIN.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

Dogmatics. *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (1) is the Cunningham Lecture on that important subject by Professor Smeaton. It is an able work which we can cordially commend; and all the more, because the literature of theology is not too rich in such treatises. The book is divided into three parts. In the first division the author surveys the Biblical Testimony in the Old and New Testament, in periods, and furnishes such a sketch as shows that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was exhibited and apprehended from the dawn of revelation, though fully displayed only on the great day of Pentecost. Then follows a brief outline of the positive truth accepted by the Church, or the form in which the Church dogmatically noted the doctrine. This is contained in the six lectures, which are required to be formally delivered. And then follows a condensed history of the doctrine from the Apostolic age to the present time. Professor Smeaton does not allow any value to that conception of man which describes his original state as commencing with a low grade or type and rising to a higher. He maintains that the modern speculation of German theologians, who hold that an incarnation would have come about in order to complete the idea of man, even though no sin had ever entered to disturb the harmony of the universe, has no Biblical foundation; but he tells us that the doctrine that man was originally though mutably replenished with the Spirit may be termed the deep fundamental thought of the Scripture doctrine of man. Dr. Smeaton holds that the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit from the human heart was one of the penal consequences of sin. Man destitute of the spirit is called flesh (Gen. vi. 3; Jude 19). The evil spirit entered the heart when the Holy Spirit withdrew, and continues to lead men captive, *working* in the children of disobedience (Eph. ii. 2). It is not denied that there still lingers in man since the Fall *some glimmerings of natural light*, some knowledge of God, and of the difference between good and evil, and some regard for virtue and good order in society. But it is all too evident that without *the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit*, men are neither able nor willing to return to God, nor to reform their natural corruption. But from the first we have brought before us the ruin and the remedy: the Word and the Spirit are in conjunction; the one filling the mind with truth, the other filling it with spiritual life. So the

Professor goes on through the various periods of revealed history, showing how the Holy Spirit never ceased to act at any time, until it culminated, as it were, on the Day of Pentecost, the great birthday of the Christian Church. Dr. Smeaton then discusses the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit; and after that the fivefold type in which the Apostolic testimony was given. Incidentally the lecturer touches many interesting topics in this consideration, and throws light on various difficult passages of Holy Writ. The lectures proper are occupied with the Person and Procession of the Spirit; His work in the Anointing of Christ; His work in connection with Revelation and Inspiration; His regenerating work in the individual; on the Spirit of Holiness, and His work in the Church. All these subjects are treated in a manner which make the work very valuable. Of Inspiration, Dr. Smeaton says there are two aspects—one in *fact*, and one in *word*. The former is the objective manifestation of the Son of God; the latter is the written Word prepared by men whom the Spirit specially called and endowed. The personal self-manifestation preceded; the written Word followed. The peculiar properties of the sacred Scriptures, such as their sufficiency, perspicuity, certainty, perfection, and Divine authority, are all derived from the fact that they were given by inspiration of God. Theologians may distinguish between the Word of God, spoken and written, but the same Divine authority belongs to both. We have not space, much as we should desire it, to go into detailed consideration of the lectures; but they are most interesting and instructive. The history of the doctrine is given succinctly, but with sufficient fulness for the student to trace its phases as they varied from age to age; and references are made to Christian writers, from Clemens Romanus down to the useful work entitled the *Spirit of Christ*, by Rev. A. Murray (London, 1888, Nisbet & Co.). The historical survey of past centuries, bringing successively under notice epochs of Revival, such as the age of Augustine, of Bernard, the Reformation and the great awakening of the last century, suggests that the Church of God is in her right attitude only when she is waiting for the fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit, who comes from Christ and leads to Christ. And for the present sore and ulcerated condition of the Church, says Dr. Smeaton, nothing but a new effusion of the Spirit will avail. Of many currents of thought now running, the Professor enumerates three, which, in his view, argue, all too plainly, a want of the Spirit's power, viz., irreverent criticism of Scripture, sensuous ritualism, and

spasmodic efforts put forth to produce by human appliances what can only be effected by the Spirit. As to the first, it has no significance and no attractions for a mind that has come under the regenerating operations of the Spirit; as for the second, to a mind replenished with the Holy Spirit, ritualistic elements have no interest; and with regard to the spasmodic efforts to awaken by human appliances a religious interest in the minds of others, we must distinguish two things that differ. There is a noble revival spirit coming from the Spirit of God Himself; there is also an effort made from self to self, arguing impatience at the slow progress of the kingdom of God, and prompting measures which are of the earth, earthy. From this can be gathered the drift of the Professor's own ideas; and though we may not altogether agree with all he says, it cannot be denied that he has produced a learned, valuable, and we will add, a timely treatise. It has reached a second edition, and we shall be surprised if many more editions are not called for.

The Bible View of the Jewish Church (2) consists of thirteen lectures given in the Fourth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, by Dr. Crosby, in which he maintains that "the Church of God is one. The Church to-day is the same Church which God brought out of the land of Egypt, the same which He will glorify in the future. The same Saviour, the same Holy Spirit, the same principles of the Divine government are found at Sinai as at Calvary. The Old Testament and the New are equally in essence (though not in completeness) the Gospel of God." Dr. Crosby is an energetic thinker and writer; he maintains his points with great learning and skill, and even where he does not carry conviction he will claim respect. The law of Moses, says Dr. Crosby, could have had its birth in no human mind. The finest hymns of the Vedas and other pagan books, the Homeric hymns, and all other such literature, cannot be compared with the Psalms. In fact, the superhuman origin of the Bible is stamped on the face of it. In the lecture on Abraham, Dr. Crosby goes into many interesting questions of ethnology; pagan idolatry is considered in that about Sinai, and there he especially points out the foundation of the soteriology of the Bible; there were conveyed to Israel the pardon of sin through a substituted sufferer exhibited in the sacrifices; the life of love made possible, as exhibited in the injunctions of the moral law; and union with God as the mode and condition of that life, as exhibited in the Tabernacle and the priesthood. As regards the wandering in the wilderness, he points

out that there was not nearly so much movement about as is commonly supposed; he also shows that while human unbelief was the proximate cause of the long abode in the desert, yet the whole period was ordained of God for the preparation of Israel for a proper entrance upon their promised inheritance. Man's freedom and God's ordination work together in perfect harmony; and the author then points out how clearly Peter puts the double truth at the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 23). Thus the learned Professor goes from point to point with an abundance of apposite illustration and sound reasoning. The little work is highly to be commended as containing within a reasonable compass a great deal of information especially on points of theology which are now somewhat in dispute; but it has neither a table of contents nor an index; and if these are supplied in a future edition, the value of it will be much enhanced.

Taking *John the Baptist* (3) as the basis of the Congregational Union Lecture for 1874, Dr. Reynolds surrounds his life and character with a vast array of interesting matter, and has furnished a valuable contribution to Christian evidences. It reminds us of Dr. Trench's works on the Parables and Miracles, for like the Archbishop, Dr. Reynolds has read widely, pondered deeply, and brought out of his stores things new and old to illustrate his subject. After pointing out the importance of the Baptist's biography, Dr. Reynolds proceeds to show what is the evidence of the evangelists with regard to it, and this gives an opportunity for glancing at the strictures of Ritschl, Baur, and others, and of examining the speculations of Schleiermacher about the *Magnificat* and other matters. He also touches upon Inspiration—both the afflatus of the prophets and that of the other writers of the sacred books. Dr. Reynolds also discourses of baptism, of miracles, of the priesthood, and of the kingdom of God and of wrath to come, asceticism, and many other topics, not forgetting the obscure sects which arose out of mistaken views of his teaching; also the honour done to him in the Roman Church, and the position assigned to him in Christian art. As the result of his researches, Dr. Reynolds claims that the history of the Baptist does away with many objections to the authenticity of the historical books of the New Testament; and shows the originality of Christ and the superiority of the kingdom of God to the Old Covenant. The work we are glad to see has reached a third edition. It has a good table of contents and an interesting preface.

Dr. Candlish's *Christian Doctrine of God* (4) is the twenty-ninth of the series of handbooks for Bible-classes, edited by the Rev. Marcus Dods and the Rev. Alexander Whyte. It is a small work, but it is

packed full of learning, thought, and wisdom. It deals with the most important of all subjects in a manner which is at once charming and convincing. It consists of three parts: the first treats of God in creation, in providence, and in His attributes as therein displayed; the next part deals with the revelation of the kingdom of God; and the third part has the Trinity for its subject. Other systems are examined, and the superiority of the Scriptural one abundantly shown; other conceptions of God's kingdom are set forth, but in order to show the sublimity of the Christian doctrine thereupon, the doctrine of the Trinity is shown to rest upon the testimony of Christ and His Apostles. All is illustrated with an abundance of learning, which includes modern research and recent conclusions; and the little treatise is most valuable as meeting most, if not all, the arguments which the various schools of ancient and modern philosophy have to urge against what is plainly shown to be the teaching of Holy Writ.

Professor Beet has issued a little *Treatise on Christian Baptism* (5), in which he defends the practice of infant baptism, and gives his reasons against the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration. He does not advance matters very much, but the work is, as might be expected, well and thoughtfully written, and will doubtless prove advantageous by directing attention to matters which, though they have ceased to be acute subjects of controversy, are always of supreme importance.

Christ Crucified (6) is a reprint of a series of lectures delivered by Dr. Saphir, on 1 Corinthians ii. We need hardly say that these lectures are characterised by great reverence and devoutness of spirit. The all-importance of the subject is well brought out, and the earnestness of the lecturer is abundantly evident. Dr. Saphir has brought much learning to bear upon the subject, and he treats it in a clear and telling manner which cannot fail to impress the reader. We heartily commend the work, for, as the author says, "to trust in Christ crucified, and to be made conformable unto His death, is the whole of Christianity"; and therefore anything which helps towards that is worthy of all acceptance by Christian people.

(1) *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*. By George Smeaton, D.D. Second Edition, 1889. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. Price 9s.

(2) *The Bible View of the Jewish Church*. By Howard Crosby. New York and London: Funk & Wagnalls. 1888.

(3) *John the Baptist*. By H. R. Reynolds, D.D. London: Congregational Union of England and Wales. 1888. Price 6s.

(4) *Christian Doctrine of God*. By J. S. Candlish, D.D. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. Price 1s. 6d.

(5) *A Treatise on Christian Baptism*. By J. A. Beet. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1888. Price 1s.

(6) *Christ Crucified*. By Adolph Saphir, D.D. Fourth edition. London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1887. Price 3s. 6d.

Magazines. AN advanced copy of a new publication called the *Expository Times* has been received. It appears to be a weekly publication upon strictly expository lines; and we heartily wish it success. In the number before us there are notes taken from various sources, which show the course of theological thought from day to day; there are sermons and essays; there is the commencement of an index of sermons on every text in the Bible, which cannot fail of being very useful; there are thoughts and illustrations, "pinches of salt" from Mr. Spurgeon's cellars; international lessons; and anecdotes for the Sunday school; and an especial feature seems to be a series of examination papers on various Biblical subjects, for which prizes are offered. There is also an index of subjects and of texts, so the number is very complete. We may add that the printing of the *Expository Times* and the general get up of it leave nothing to be desired.

We have also received the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for July, which contains some very noticeable articles, e.g., the Creative Laws, by Dr. Kellogg; the New Testament and the Sabbath, by the Rev. A. E. Thomson, &c.

The Presbyterian Review has articles on Dr. Shedd's Theology; the Babylonian Flood Legend; the Planet Mars; Nature and Miracle; and others well worth reading. This, as well as the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, is most carefully edited.

The Homiletic Magazine runs on its useful course, and contains much matter of interest to all preachers and teachers; who must be hard to please if they cannot find help in its pages.

The *Anglican Church Magazine* is a monthly publication and the *Foreign Church Review* a quarterly magazine devoted to the interests of Protestant Churches on the Continent. We do not doubt that they find interested readers abroad; and they ought to find readers at home as well, for they give many particulars which can hardly fail to excite attention about the progress of the Churches in localities where especially English-speaking congregations are found in various parts of Europe.

The *P. P. Index* is calculated to afford an immense help to *littérateurs* of all sorts, for here is the place to find the source of articles and works on all kinds of subjects. A writer is often at a loss where to seek for information, and often spends hours in hunting up matter; in this useful index he will receive the most efficient assistance.