

and were welcome. It aims at no novelty, it claims no speciality of scholarship. For the plain reader and the plain teacher these simple thoughts on the Word of God are plainly set forth. They are often bright with suggestion; they are always fully evangelical.

THE LARGER CHRIST. BY THE REV. GEORGE D. HERRON, D.D. (*Oliphant, Anderson, & Ferricr.* Crown 8vo, pp. 122. 1s. 6d.) Some months ago we were much struck with an article which appeared in *Christian Thought* under the title, "The Spirituality of the Material." The writer's name, which we had not elsewhere noticed, was given as George D. Herron, D.D. There was a victorious freedom in handling one of the most complex questions that marked a true thinker as well as a fearless speaker. He seemed to have as his text, though he nowhere quoted it, that saying of our Lord, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," and he lifted it clean out of the apologetic atmosphere in which we find and leave it befogged, lifted it into the clear shining of the Lord's own victory by means of the mammon, till one could see it radiant with the brightness that streamed from the cross of Him who could not save Himself.

In turning to the volume before us, the first we have seen by this same author, though another came along with it and had to be undertaken immediately after, we hoped to find the social question, as we call it, dealt with here also. And we find it. But not in the same way. Here the social question becomes absorbed in a greater, even identified with it, for it is not separate, and carried along in the same triumphant assurance that we will subordinate ourselves and all that belongs to us to the larger Christ.

THE CALL OF THE CROSS. BY GEORGE D. HERRON, D.D. (*Oliphant, Anderson, & Ferricr.* Crown 8vo, pp. 111. 1s. 6d.) This volume, like the one just noticed, contains four sermons; they are better than most men's forty. They are as uplifting, cheering, stimulating; they are as thoughtful and far-seeing; they are as victoriously and eternally right.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AS SET FORTH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. BY GEORGE G. FINDLAY, B.A. (*Kelly.* Crown 8vo, pp. 76. 1s.) This is no polemic, short-sighted, short-lived. It is the outcome of very capable study of the New Testament expressed in briefest compass yet clearest thought, and all in the very spirit of the Master, or of him who following the Master urged us to speak the truth in love. In the first of the two lectures Professor Findlay deals with the teaching of Christ, in the other with the teaching of the apostles.

VOCABULARY OF NEW TESTAMENT WORDS. BY OZORA STEARNS DAVIS. (Hartford: *The Seminary Press.* 8vo, pp. 32.) In this pamphlet all the Greek words that occur in the New Testament more than ten times are arranged according to their root affinity, and the number of times of their occurrence in each separate book of the New Testament is marked. Thus—

Word.	Matt.	Mark	Luke.	Acts.	Heb.	James.	Peter.	Jude.	John.			Paul.	Total.
									Gos.	Epis.	Apoc.		
αἴμα,	11	3	8	11	21	...	2		6	4	19	12	97
δικαιοσύνη,	7	...	1	4	6	3	6		2	3	2	58	92

Short Expository Papers.

Nicodemus.

A CLOSE study of Nicodemus has compelled me to the conviction that the current interpretation which regards him as a true seeker must be somewhat beside the mark.

To read the chapter in its present form may favour his ingenuousness; but if the incident be

held to begin with ver. 23 of chap. ii., a different complexion is given to the narrative.

Against the older interpretation there lie several difficulties—the lack of anything like confession of discipleship on the part of Nicodemus as a result of the interview, suggesting that he remained undecided; the absence in the words of the disciples in the Gospels and Epistles of any hint of

his being regarded as a disciple, even a secret one, which, considering his social position, might have been expected as giving prestige to the Nazarene band; the evident surprise which his colleagues in the Sanhedrim felt at even his friendliness to Jesus, suggesting their previous confidence in his Judaism, a confidence incompatible even with a secret discipleship on the part of Nicodemus, which, had it existed, the vigilance of the oversight of Christ's followers by the official spies must have discovered, or at least suspected; these seem insuperable difficulties anent the current view. Even the coming of Nicodemus with Joseph of Arimathea to beg the body of Christ is explicable as the act of a generous humanness, while the tenor of his opening words in that midnight interview is so suavely insinuating as to rouse even in us who read it a suspicion of ulterior intent. These considerations point to the idea, that so far from Nicodemus coming by night, for *fear of the Jews*, *i.e.* the leaders, his mission was really a political one. He came as an emissary from them, and *secretly*, in order that their negotiations might not prejudice their power over the common folk.

Ver. 23 gives us the first public recognition of Christ as the new teacher. This adherence of many to Him must of necessity have drawn the attention of the Rabbis to Him as a formidable rival, and more particularly such because of the wonder-working-power which He possessed. This gift seems to have been the feature in Christ's ministry which most early drew adherents to Him, for in ver. 23 the popular belief in Him is expressly stated to have been created by the "miracles which He did," while this feature is used by Nicodemus as Christ's highest credential. In this the Rabbis could not emulate Him, and fearing His growing popularity they were favourable to an alliance with Him if possible.

Ver. 24 implies that overtures had been made to Him, which, however, He rejected because of the motives which had prompted them. He "did not trust Himself unto them for that He knew all men . . ." "for He Himself knew what was in man" (margin "the man," *i.e.* the emissary).

Christ mistrusted their professions of belief as being transparently polite. We must remember that the Jewish leaders were not at first opposed to Christ. Their hostility was of gradual growth, culminating when Christ had completely broken with them. This hatred must have had a genesis, and what more natural or effective causes can be

imagined than a number of unrecorded instances similar to this one. Hence it seemed the best policy for them to temporise with Christ, and Nicodemus was sent to pave the way, carrying with him prestige, as being of high rank in the Council. With true Pharisaic flattery he introduces himself. Christ, however, knew who His visitor was, and whatever may have been Nicodemus' message, he never delivered it, for his opening words are very much in contrast with what followed.

The fact was, Christ prevented the divulging of his mission, by turning and nonplussing him in his opening sentences.

Christ practically contradicted his first statement, which implied their own electness in that they could weigh correctly His miracles as credentials of His Messiahship. Christ replied that they were on a false basis of spiritual knowledge, for a true discovery of His kingdom was only possible to those who had been born into the spiritual realm of light, which they had not. 'This was not what the self-complacent Pharisee expected, and, thrown off the track, he confusedly asks the first question which suggests itself from the words of Christ. Christ then answers him, showing from the nature of this stupid reply of Nicodemus how baseless had been his opening profession of the Pharisees' faith in Him. Availing Himself of the nonplussed but entranced state of Nicodemus, Christ proceeded to instruct him in spiritual verities, while blending instruction with rebuke of the perverse density of his class. In ver. 11 Christ finely contrasts His own "We know" with the "We know" with which Nicodemus had introduced himself, and ends the interview with a rebuke of these overtures in the dark, which, because they are not wrought in God, dare not come out into the light.

This method of treating captious listeners was not foreign to Christ. In the following chapter, with the woman of Samaria, we have a similar instance, a profitless and mischievous topic is thwarted at its very introduction by the deduction of a more vital one from the opening words.

This disarmament of Nicodemus, we think, is quite sufficient to account for the interest he took in Christ in chaps. xii. and xix., while not begetting such discipleship as to call for abnegation of his official position, or even to prevent him forming (from a strict sense of duty) part of that Council which condemned Christ. Indeed his begging and

embalming the body of Jesus may have been the penitence of remorse. At any rate, the accomplished end in Nicodemus seems scarcely worthy of the august means adopted by Christ in this interview.

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Grace and Truth.

ST. JOHN i. 14. "Full of grace and truth;" ver. 17. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."—Is this not an instance of the use of the figure *hendiadys*, one thing by two things, in which for sake of emphasis a substantive is placed after, instead of an adjective before, a substantive which it is intended to qualify in an emphatic way? By regarding these expressions as instances of the figure *hendiadys*, do we not gain a clearer insight into the meaning of the passage i. 12–17? Regarding, then, truth as the qualifying term, we explain the expression "grace and truth" as meaning "the true (or substantial) grace." The contrast is with the *δύναμις*, *potentia*, capability or faculty (implied by the use of *ἐξουσία* in ver. 12) for becoming the sons of God which we have by right of birth in God's image, whereby we can keep so much of God's moral law as is implanted in us or impressed upon us by our environment. That men have this *potentia* is, I am personally convinced from observation and study of heathen nations, beyond doubt; e.g. the moral lives of the Zulus. The *ἐξουσία*, *potestas*, right, power, liberty, to become children of God in the fullest sense is a real substantial grace, given to us (ver. 12, "He gave") by means of Jesus Christ (ver. 18), of which grace He is full (ver. 14), and of whose fulness, (*πλήρωμα*, "the totality of the divine powers and attributes") we all (ver. 16), that is, as many as received Him by believing on Him (ver. 12), received. We can only receive power or right to attain to our *πλήρωμα*, the full development of the children of God, step by step (cf. "grace for grace," ver. 16; that is, each grace by being faithfully used is followed by the bestowal of more grace). The grace is real and substantial, and thus the "right to become the children of God" is based on a substantial grace, "given to us spontaneously by God through Christ because of God's absolute loving-kindness towards mankind"—the force of *χάρις*.

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The Fourth Commandment.

THE retention of the Decalogue in the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England has been a stumbling-block to many members of that Communion on account of the difficulties in connexion with the Fourth Commandment.

Putting aside the question of the change of day from the seventh to the first day of the week, there remains the more important objection commonly advanced, that this commandment being a *positive* precept does not occupy the same position as the others which are *moral* commands. I have come to the conclusion that such a distinction does not exist in this case, but appears to be due to our present somewhat artificial social condition. Modern investigation shows that one day's rest in seven is necessary to both man and beast in order to preserve health and strength to labour on the remaining six. That being so, it is as much a moral duty to abstain from working, and from compelling others to work, on the seventh day as it is to abstain from theft or adultery. If we steal we injure a man in his possessions only, and were we Socialists there would be no such thing as theft. If we compel our servants, or those over whom we have authority, to work seven days in the week we injure their bodies, and to a certain extent their minds; besides, in all probability, depriving them of opportunity for worship, a moral offence surely. Nor have we any more right to neglect the observance of the day of rest ourselves, as a day of rest only, than we have to get drunk or over-indulge in the pleasures of the table. Work is necessary and so is food, but too much of either is detrimental to our mental and moral as well as our physical well-being.

I believe the Episcopal Church in the United States has substituted for the Decalogue our Lord's epitome, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," etc.; and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

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