

laid on the communication of light; no reference to the fact that in all our religious knowledge much remains dark.

St. Paul is "a steward of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1); his duty is to keep truths safe, and dispense them to all.

In Coloss. and Ephes. the one special "mystery," all through,¹ is the free admission of the Gentiles on equal terms to the privileges of the covenant. Coloss. iv. 3, *μ. τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, the truth respecting Christ. Eph. vi. 19; *μ. τοῦ εὐαγγελίου*, contained in the Gospel.

Rom. xvi. 25 and 26, purpose hidden, now revealed and made known.² 1 Cor. ii. 7.

St. Paul uses the word twenty times. It is found once in the Gospel history—"Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven."

The word is found six times in the book of Revelation: mystic or hidden sense. i. 20; xvii. 5. Cf. Dan. ii. 18, "secret"; Sept., *μυστηρίου*; Vulg., *sacramento*.

The word "mystery," like the word "sacrament" itself, at an early date became used ecclesiastically for the appointed ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper (says Dean Howson). It is interesting to find in our Prayer-Book side by side "this holy sacrament," derived from the oath of the Roman soldiers, and "these holy mysteries," derived from the secret societies of the Greeks.³

Review.

The Doctrine of the Death of Christ, in relation to the Sin of Man, the Condemnation of the Law, and the Dominion of Satan. By the Rev. NATHANIEL DIMOCK, M.A. Elliot Stock.

THE subject which Mr. Dimock, in his usual thorough way, has handled in this volume is one among the theological questions of the day which can scarcely be described as "burning," but it yields to no other in importance. Theological discussions in the sphere of Christianity vary in their weight according to their proximity to the centre of the Christian Creed. Undoubtedly the *question* of all questions which faces everyone to whom Christianity presents itself with a demand for hearty acceptance and obedience is: "What think ye of Christ?" And one part of the answer to this question, if it does not involve, will certainly very soon evolve, the further question, "What think ye of the *death* of Christ?" In this treatise we have Mr. Dimock's answer to this question, not generally, but specifically, in its threefold relation to sinful man, the holy God, and the rule of Satan. Holding, as he does, the conviction that controversy in these days is, however painful, a very sacred duty, it were to be wished that all who enter this arena should conduct themselves

¹ Excepting Eph. v. 32, "this mystery [truth about marriage] is great;" *artissima illa conjunctio viri et mulieris*. See Ellicott. Mr. Moule paraphrases the verse thus: "This revealed mystery, the Union of Bridegroom and Bride, is great; but I say so in reference to the Bridal of redemption, to which our thought has been drawn."

² 1 Tim. iii. 9, 16, the truths which faith and godliness keep and embrace.

³ "Thoughts on the Epiphany," the CHURCHMAN, February, 1881 (vol. iii., p. 384).

with that spirit of self-government and sacred regard for truth which he exhibits throughout these pages.

The death of Christ ever has been, and we suppose ever will be, a fruitful topic of theological discussion. Even if we shut out of our view the Socinian hypothesis, that the efficacy of His death is restricted to its being an example of faithfulness, and accept as true the fact that it was the death of the Incarnate Son of God, and that in some sense or other it was efficient in changing the relations subsisting between the holy God and sinful man, we still find, within these limits, abundant room for diversities of theory. Narrowing down this subject of inquiry, the question which Mr. Dimock has set himself to answer is this: assuming that an Atonement was effected by the Lord Jesus Christ, was it finished, completed, consummated by His death on the cross, or was that death an inchoate, incomplete, unfinished Atonement, to be eked out and consummated by something remaining to be done, and now being done, by Him in heaven? Jesus Christ was the realized ideal High-Priest (*ἀληθινός*), corresponding to and exceeding (as substance to shadow) the typical high-priest of the Jewish Economy. As such a High-Priest he offered a sacrifice; was that sacrifice offered, finished and done with by His death upon earth, or is He now, as High-Priest, doing something in heaven, connected with that sacrifice upon earth, either in the way of completing it, or repeating it, or continuing it? In short, was the death of Christ upon earth in accordance with the requirements of Divine righteousness, *the alone efficient cause* of the restoration of kindly feelings—or, more correctly, of the outflow of the pre-existent love of God towards man, the securing of peace with a sinful world on the Divine side, or was it not? If it was, then all that remains to be done now is the announcement universally of this amnesty to a sinful, hostile world; that is, the application of the acquired results of that death to individual men, and their cordial acceptance of these results exhibited in a practical manner by their responsive love of God and Christ. If it was not, then this publication of the Gospel of Peace must be provisional, pending the accomplishment by the Mediator of something else in heaven in addition to what He has done upon earth.

In all investigations, whether in the domain of physical science or in the sphere of revealed truth, it is essentially necessary that the issue to be decided should be clearly and unequivocally stated. Frequently, an immense tangle and jungle of irrelevant matter is cleared away, if we can but frame the right interrogatory. "*Prudens interrogatio dimidium scientia est.*" Now, reconciliation may require for its effectuation a change of feeling either in one or both of the estranged parties. In the mutual relations of the holy God and sinful man there is estrangement on both sides. There is the righteousness of God in its aspect towards sin, which, in the language of Scripture, is termed *wrath*; and there is the feeling of suspicion and dislike of a holy God lurking in the breast of sinful man. We are not concerned now with the removal of the latter cause of alienation. This is a continuous process carried on by the ministry of the Church. It is the Divine alienation alone which is the point before us. The removal of *this* alienation was accomplished and done with once for all by the death of Christ upon the cross, just as the Second Article states, "*Qui vere passus est, crucifixus, mortuus et sepultus, ut Patrem nobis reconciliaret.*"

The method which the author adopts and follows is constructive. The defence of the truth is the primary end which he sets before himself. The erroneous views which he combats are not distinctly and formally stated, while the authors who propound these views are only very occasionally mentioned in the foot-notes. No doubt this method has its advantages. The soul is built up by positive truth; it is not fed by

negations of aberrancies from the truth. Still, at the same time, if we might venture to suggest, it would have been more helpful to the student if, while there had been a self-denying abridgment of quotations from authors who favour his theses, there had been also an adequate number of apposite quotations, distinctly expressive of the erroneous theories which he rebuts. Perhaps this suggested addition may be supplied in a second edition.

Our space will not allow us to do more than give a kind of sample of the process of the argumentation and of the conclusions reached in this discussion. After a general view of the field of investigation, and of the nature of the light by which that investigation is to be pursued, the author goes on to lay down a series of propositions, in synthetical order, with reference to the efficacy of Christ's death, which, when they are substantiated, simply and consequentially, foreclose the further question of *any* continuance or repetition or completion of an atoning sacrifice in heaven. It is thus formulated that the death of Christ (1) directly, (2) alone, (3) by virtue of the death, and not merely by holy obedience, affects the matter of the justification of man, and, lastly, (4) it does this by affecting the attributes of God, by reconciling Divine perfections in their bearing on the condition of fallen humanity. Each of these four propositions is, in a most careful and scholarlike way, insulated from all adjacent collateral matters with which it might be confused or identified, and then each is firmly established by the adduction of adequate pertinent testimony from the Divine Record. As illustration of the author's acuteness in sharply distinguishing the question at issue and in eliminating all irrelevant matter, we may adduce the following: "It is not questioned that the death would have availed nothing without the perfect obedience, active and passive. But it is certain, by the teaching of Holy Scripture, that the perfect obedience availed not apart from the death"¹ "Christ's obedience *qua* obedience did not, and could not, of itself procure our justification, yet it must be clearly seen that it was his obedience *qua* obedience which gave to His death its very power to justify."² "It was death as the penal consequence of sin, not death *qua* 'a form of holiness and love,' to which our redemption is to be ascribed."³

Some of our readers may regard these exemplary distinctions as superfluous refinements, but such a judgment, we consider, would be rather indicative of superficial thinking. There is no department of knowledge, sacred or profane, in which an advance is not marked by the discernment of distinctions, where, to the surface-view, there was one confused mass.

After thus discussing in this thorough and methodical manner the relation of Christ's death to the moral law, the author advances to the investigation of its relation to the ceremonial. *Prima facie*, antecedently, one would suppose that this investigation could not be very difficult, nor very important. The ceremonial law is a system of ritual. Such a system at the very best is but an imperfect representation of moral and theological truth. We may, of course, learn something about an object by examining its shadow but the knowledge thus acquired cannot be either clear or distinct. We shall get a very incomplete apprehension of the object as a whole, and perhaps no knowledge whatever, or a very inaccurate and misleading knowledge, of its component elements. Yet, as matter of fact, it is on the ceremonial law that the erroneous views with regard to the efficacy of Christ's death as an atonement are based, from which they spring, and by arguments from which their validity is assumed to be established. As a simple illustration—*ex uno disce omnes*—of this logically vicious mode of studying and expounding

¹ P. 20, n.² P. 21, n.³ P. 22, n.

New Testament doctrine, let us take the following quotation from Dean Alford's Commentary on Heb. ii. 17, p. 53 a: "It was not the death (though that was a previous necessity, and therefore is spoken of as involving the whole), but the bringing the blood into the holy place, in which the work of sacerdotal expiation consisted; see Lev. iv. 13-20 and *passim*." If in the dim twilight of early dawn we descried some object which we took to be a cow or an ass, we should not argue that we were correct if, on seeing the object in broad daylight, we discovered it to be a mound of earth. Why did not the Dean substantiate his interpretation by a reference to an explicit statement in the broad-daylight treatise of this very Epistle to the Hebrews? Where in this Epistle do we find any clear, definite statement that the true High-Priest presents and sprinkles the blood of His true sacrifice in the antitypical Holy Place, in heaven itself? If such an idea is not to be found in the sunshine of this Epistle, we may logically conclude that such a view of the sacrificial atonements of the ceremonial law is erroneous, and only found in *Leviticus* by a mistaken exegesis.

In these remarks, however, we are anticipating the author's reasoning. He prefaces this important chapter by signaling two forms of error: (a) "The first is that which regards the great sacrifice of propitiation, the atonement-price for sin, as offered and paid, not on the cross (or not only on the cross), but afterwards in heaven. (b) The second is that which, in view of the Old Testament sacrifices, regards the shed blood which is said to make atonement as representing not the death, but the life after death, or liberated by death, of the sacrifice slain, or which attributes the sacrificial efficacy not to the blood without the soul, but to the shed blood as animated by the soul."

The two views here propounded as erroneous seem to be, if not mutually implicative, yet supportive and corroborative of each other. Those who hold the theory that the sacrificial atonement of Christ is now being perpetuated or repeated by Him in heaven generally support their view by the assumed teaching of the Old Testament on the efficacy of the Levitical sacrifices. And, on the other side, those who, by a kind of upside-down method of looking at things, have concluded that the assumed teaching of *Leviticus* must govern the teaching of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, somehow seem to be landed in the doctrine that the Atonement of Christ was not consummated upon earth, but after His ascension into heaven. The former opinion generally has the suffrages of those who hold extreme high views on the subject of the Eucharist, as being in some real sense a propitiatory sacrifice, in the offering of which the Christian minister is a sacrificing priest. Nor can we be greatly surprised, if those who have turned their backs upon the daylight and wandered off into the region of twilight and type, to obtain thence more luminous perceptions of what the teaching of the New Testament is on the subject of Christ's Atonement, should come back with strange reports of what they have seen and learned, and, under the influence of these ideas so gathered, should put strange interpretations upon the unequivocal language of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*. Nor need we be at all perturbed should we find that these novel interpretations, in contrast with the old-established theology, are decorated with the title "scientific"; though, to be sure, it is a violation of the conditions of a scientific hypothesis to ignore any fact which is present within the scope of the inquiry, as well as to introduce any which are not to be found there.

This *hysteronproteron* method of investigation is, with very good reason, promptly condemned by Mr. Dimock. A "scientific" theory and explanation of the efficacy of Christ's atoning sacrifice is not to be reached under the guidance of this *ignis-fatuus*. It is both common-sense, real

science, and sound theology, to hold "that what is obscurely seen in twilight may be more clearly seen in daylight."¹ By a marshalled array of pertinent passages adduced from the New Testament, and especially the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, and by a logical induction from those passages, he proves (i.) that the sacrifice of Christ is the *only* propitiation for sin, and (ii.) that there is no warrant for the idea, recently adopted by some modern divines, that the efficacy of the Atonement specially lies in the offering of Christ's blood in the true Holy of Holies.

It is astonishing how much a preconception or prejudice will distort the judgment in the simplest matters; it will even twist the very testimony of the senses. It can, we think, be ascribed to nothing else but the perverting influence of the preconceived theory, viz., that the inadequate representations of *Leviticus* must override the definite statements of *Hebrews*, that modern divines have taught that Christ presented His blood in heaven. There is no statement, or any hint, anywhere in the *Hebrews*—though in the course of the argument there was much occasion to introduce it—that there is any offering of Christ's blood in heaven. It is quite true that the Levitical high-priest, after the accomplishment of the atoning sacrifice on the brazen altar, brings the blood of the sacrificed victim, and presents *that* in the holy place; and he does so for the very simple and sufficient reason that he could not offer the sacrificed victim itself. He brings the evidence of the life surrendered, and applies the results of the life surrendered. But this is not the act of atonement, nor any part of the act of atonement. Now, in the ideal-realized perfect Sacrifice, as opposed to the imperfect, defective Levitical sacrifice, the true High-Priest presents in the true Holy Place, not His blood, as evidence and result, but *Himself*, and He presents Himself as having been sacrificed. It is under the illusory influence of this *ignis-fatuus*, this vicious method of interpretation, this sort of Hindu *Mâyâ*, that the learned Dr. Westcott is able to write:² "The sacrifice upon the altar of the cross preceded the presentation of the blood."

Now, he is well aware, and when delivered from the malign influence of this illusion he plainly says, that there is no record of any presentation of the blood by Christ, and, of course, there was not, and need not have been, for the convincing reason already adduced—*He was there Himself*.

The Atonement was one completed complex act, comprising the inexpressible dignity of the Divine-human Priest, the inexpressible dignity of the Divine-human Victim, and the inexpressible moral worth of the sacrificial offering. Of this act of atonement, comprising these indissolubly united factors, the "blood of Christ" is the compendious, convenient expression and outward sign. The blood of Christ is of no moral value and possesses no spiritual efficiency, *in itself, apart from this significance*. It is the outward sign of *such* a life so surrendered; and neither in the type nor in the antitype, neither in the holy place nor anywhere else, is atonement effected by the sign, but by the thing signified. The holy free surrender of Christ's will to death in endorsement of His Father's will was the payment of the ransom-price. But, according to the upside-down reasoning of some modern commentators, we must conclude that a *paper cheque* has inherent intrinsic value of itself, and when the amount demanded has been paid in sterling gold, the purchase is really effected and completed by the subsequent presentation of the paper cheque! And when in ordinary parlance and abbreviated phraseology we say, "Payment has been made by *cheque*," it is the cheque itself—not the cheque as the token of real money to be paid—it is the cheque itself which effects payment by virtue of its own intrinsic worth

¹ P. 88.

² *Heb. ix. 14, in loco.*

We have endeavoured to present in a succinct and popular form the important doctrinal conclusions which the author has endeavoured, and successfully endeavoured, to substantiate. The treatise is overlaid with numerous voluminous notes, which, however interesting and instructive, somewhat distract the reader's attention from the point at issue. This multiplicity of corroborative annotation is also unnecessary. The author is able to make good by his own arguments the truths he is enforcing, but if the reader is not careful to keep a firm hold of the thread of the reasoning in the text, these abundant illustrations tend rather to confuse and perplex him. Apart from this small drawback, the work under notice is very opportune and of great worth, and we can heartily commend it to be carefully read and pondered over by the general reader as well as by the theological student.

S. DYSON, D.D.

Short Notices.

Cathedral and University Sermons. By CHARLES PARSONS REICHEL, D.D.,
D.Lit., Bishop of Meath. Pp. 320. Macmillan and Co.

ON the ability and judgment of the Bishop of Meath nothing need here be said. These sermons will repay careful reading. Here and there we have pencilled a note of interrogation in the margin. The sermon on Confession, lucid and full of information, is truly admirable. We quote a portion of the historical sketch, as follows :

"In the middle of the third century, after the great Decian persecution, we find suddenly two opposite ideas started. The one declared that such persons (penitents) must be left to God alone . . . it was not lawful to re-admit such. They were to be left to God's uncovenanted mercies. The other party compounded matters with this more rigorous view, by stopping at a single readmission. If a person once excluded and then readmitted should offend in like manner a second time, he forfeited the pardon of the Church for ever ; about his eternal fate the Church at first did not venture to dogmatize, but as time advanced it was boldly pronounced that, inasmuch as outside the Church is no salvation, so relapsed sinners being for ever outside the Church on earth, could hope for no mercy hereafter. As to the absolution imparted in such cases, it was simply the act of solemnly readmitting to communion. The penitent was brought up to that part of the edifice appropriated to communicants, and there welcomed by the bishop with the kiss of peace and the impartation of the consecrated bread and wine. No particular form of words was needed ; the restoration to the highest Church privilege expressed and sealed the Divine forgiveness. And hence in the most ancient Greek Liturgies, as in the Canon of the Mass in the Latin Church, which is the most ancient and venerable part of its Liturgy, there is no trace of any form of absolution such as we use in our communion office. The reception of the elements was the absolution.