

homely truth that if we are to have this deep sense of tranquillity about the future on reasonable grounds, those grounds must be that we have done our best to provide for it.

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## Notes on Bible Words.

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### No. XVI.—“VIRTUE.”

IF there be any ἀρετή (Phil. iv. 8): *virtus*, in the Vulgate; hence our “virtue”: “whatever virtue there is;” (Alford). Any particular moral excellence; whatever may rightly be called “virtue.”

This common heathen term for moral excellence, ἀρετή, seems to have been studiously avoided by St. Paul; he uses it only here. Is there in this passage, with ἀρετή and ἔπαινος, a summation? Or (with Bishop Lightfoot) thus: “Whatever value may reside in your old heathen conception of virtue, whatever consideration is due to the praise of men . . .”<sup>2</sup>

This word is used elsewhere in N.T. only in 1 Pet. ii. 9, of God; 2 Pet. i. verse 3 of God, verse 5 of believers.

1 Pet. ii. 9, “. . . show forth the praises” (marg. or, “virtues”)<sup>3</sup>: perfections. The R.V. has “the excellencies.” Sept. in Isa. xliii. 21, here quoted, for “praises” has ἀρετὰς. (Isa. xlii. 12 and xliii. 7.) The praises, says Canon Cook, are the recognition of the divine attributes.

2 Pet. i. 3, “. . . called us to glory and virtue”; marg. “or, by.” R.V. “by his own g. and virtue,”<sup>4</sup> ἰδίᾳ δ. κ. ἀρετῇ. *Excellency*, says Dr. Lumby; in exact accordance with the usage in the first Ep.: “the manifestation of God’s working in and for believers.”

Verse 5, “add to your faith virtue.” R.V., “in your faith supply virtue.” Vulg. ministrare in fide vestra virtutem: ἐπιχορηγήσατε ἐν τῇ . . . ἐν (in the exercise of) your faith provide, or furnish. The “special sense” (Lightfoot) in this verse seems to be *vigour*; earnestness, moral courage; as Bengel, “a strenuous tone and vigour of mind.”

“Virtue” also stands (A.V.) for δύναμις, *power*. Mark v. 30, “perceiving in Himself that virtue (δύναμιν, virtutem) had gone out of Him”: R.V., “that the power *proceeding* from Him had gone forth.” Luke vi. 19; viii. 46: “power.”

<sup>1</sup> See P. Book: “. . . true religion, and virtue.” Cf. Bishop Butler. Diss. II. “Of the Nature of Virtue.” Meyer says ἀρετή designates moral excellence in feeling and action.

<sup>2</sup> “Praise is the reflection of virtue.”—Bacon.

<sup>3</sup> Vulg. ut virtutes adnuntietis (les vertus). *Virtus*, properly, by derivation, manliness, courage, and so like the classical ἀρετή, of action, or in ethical sense, excellence. Cf. Wisdom iv. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Vulg. propria gloria et virtute. Cf. Hab. iii. 3 and Isai. xlii. 8.