

ment which, prior to and apart from His appearing, was already extant for men. On the other hand (as in ver. 24), the word, *which they have heard from the beginning*, is certainly that which they have heard as the commandment of Christ from the beginning of their acquaintance with the gospel. John looks upon this commandment of brotherly love as the real principal content of the whole gospel message—so far, at least, as it is a practical message. This natural law of brotherly love, he says, is that which ye have heard as the commandment of Christ since the beginning of your acquaintance with the gospel; this and nothing else. Ye know, therefore, of yourselves what I mean, when I speak of the “commandment of Christ.”

According to this, the commandment of brotherly love has been given to men at large from the beginning of the human race, and in a certain measure they have also been conscious of it. It is an essential feature of the characteristic Christian frame of mind, that the Christian is conscious of the will of his Saviour as a will that does not at all impose new demands that were not already of themselves involved in the nature of the human race. They are rather purely and universally human demands, which the Saviour addresses to us; but they are none the less on that account

demands which He first actually makes. He first brings them into man's full, clear consciousness, and puts them in such a way that man becomes aware of their inevitable obligatoriness for him. Thus the Saviour first, so far as we are concerned, draws forth the half-buried primal, divine commandment into the full daylight of our consciousness. What we as men really are becomes manifest to us, first of all, in and through Him. The Christian is only man; but he is man as only the Christian knows him. The Christian must, therefore, with the most unconditional consent of his inmost nature, decide with respect to the Lord, that He only demands that which a man worthy of himself must absolutely demand of himself. Upon this, also, rests to some extent the Christian's assurance of the coming, perfect universality of faith in Christ. Because the Saviour brings nothing else than what belongs essentially to man as such, He must be able to find acceptance with all men; and because no other than He can perfectly communicate what belongs to the true nature of man, all must ultimately come to Him, in order to obtain it from Him. The Christian, however, should be all the more heedful that nothing is mixed up with Christianity, that is not in itself necessarily human, and that Christianity is not robbed of this its truly divine universalism by ordinances of man.

### The Dispensation of the Spirit.

BY THE REV. JOHN PORTEOUS, M.A., B.D.

IF there were saints of the Old Testament, they must have been sanctified, and that by the Spirit. Wherein, then, consists the pre-eminence of the New Testament Dispensation as regards the outpouring of the Spirit? (Matt. iii. 11; John vii. 39, xvi. 7).

The answer is: On the basis of the new Dispensation there is vastly wider scope for the action of the Spirit than there could be on the basis of the old.

1. The tacit assumption of the Law was that a man might sanctify himself. Experience was to show the fallacy of this. The Holy Spirit was not promised, though He would not be withheld from those who realized their helplessness and sought Divine aid (Ps. li. 11; cxliii. 10). On the other hand, the gospel, starting with the proclamation of human helplessness, had, as its very design, the outpouring of the Spirit. Thus the operations of the Spirit under the New Testament greatly exceed anything known before. Ours is the missionary epoch.

2. The Spirit is the Spirit of truth (John xiv. 17). In His action on the soul, He keeps pace with the

revelation of truth (so cf. 1 Pet. i. 23, and John iii. 5). His work is to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us (John xvi. 13-15). In so far, then, as the revelation of truth is narrowed (as, e.g., under the Old Testament), the action of the Spirit is narrowed. The less distinctly and completely the things of Christ are within human cognition (as, e.g., before Christ came), the less full can be the work of the Spirit. There is a Christian “full assurance,” “peace,” “joy,” “hope,” “love,” “fellowship,” “character,” which can be produced only on the basis of Christian facts and principles. The production of these constitutes the special outpouring of the Spirit in Christian times.

### For the Study of the Bible.

#### II.

THE CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S EDUCATION UNION.

THIS Society has made remarkable progress in Scotland since its establishment eight years ago, under the presidency first of the Countess of Aberdeen, and latterly of Lady Victoria Campbell. Its main object is to promote among educated women, especially among those who have recently left

school, the combination of the pursuit of the higher branches of secular education with the thorough and devotional study of the Scriptures.

Special prominence was given, at the annual meeting in Perth in September, to a new development of the movement. A branch was formed a year ago, under the name of the "Scottish Women's Bible Study Association," with a view to "the definite, devotional, and systematic study of the Scriptures."

No doctrinal test is required of *members*; but no one is admitted to the Council of the Association, or to a place among its leaders, who does not profess belief in the articles of the Apostles' Creed, and in "the divine inspiration and authority of the Bible, as the supreme rule of faith and life." A course of Bible study is prescribed for each winter; books are recommended in connection with it, and examinations (optional) held in spring.

For last winter the papers were on the Book of Exodus, by Rev. J. H. Skrine, warden of Trinity College, Glenalmond; and on the first half of the Gospel according to St. John, by Rev. James Robertson, D.D., Whittinghame. For session 1890-91 the papers are on the Book of Job, by Dean Montgomery, Edinburgh; and on the second half of the Fourth Gospel, including the question of its authorship, by the Rev. Dr. Robertson of Whittinghame. These papers may be had on application (enclosing stamped envelope) to the General Secretary, Mrs. Bannerman, 1 King's Place, Perth. M. H. B.

### At the Literary Table.

Some of the leading publishers have sent us lists of their forthcoming books, from which we make the following attractive selection:—

- Body: *School of Calvary* (Longmans).  
 Bright: *Lessons from Athanasius, Chrysostom, and Augustine* (Longmans).  
 Curtiss: *Biography of Delitzsch* (T. & T. Clark).  
 Delitzsch: *Isaiah*, vol. ii., latest edition (T. & T. Clark).  
 „ *Messianic Prophecies* (T. & T. Clark).  
 Douglas: *Minor Prophets* (T. & T. Clark).  
 Driver: *Literature of the Old Testament* (T. & T. Clark).  
 Findlay: *Thessalonians* (Camb. Bible for Colleges).  
 Gwilliam: *Peshito Version of Gospels* (Clar. Press).  
 Hall, Newman: *Gethsemane* (T. & T. Clark).  
 Hatch: *Concordance to Septuagint* (Clar. Press).  
 Humphreys: *Timothy and Titus* (Camb. Bible for Colleges).  
 Jebb: *Erasmus*, The Rede Lecture (Camb. Univ. Press).  
 Kirkpatrick: *Psalms*, vol. i. (Camb. Bible for Colleges).  
 Newman: *Letters and Correspondence* (Longmans).  
 Paget: *Sermons* (Longmans).  
 Payne-Smith: *Thesaurus Syriacus* (Clar. Press).

- Perowne: *Galatians* (Camb. Bible for Colleges).  
 Riehm: *Messianic Prophecy*, new edition (T. & T. Clark).  
 Ryle and James: *Psalms of Solomon* (Camb. Univ. Press).  
 Schürer: *Jewish People in Time of Christ*, div. i. vol. ii. (T. & T. Clark).  
 Simcox: *Revelation* (Camb. Bible for Colleges).  
 Stirling, Dr. Hutchison: *Philosophy and Theology*, The Gifford Lectures (T. & T. Clark).  
*Studia Biblica*, vol. iii. (Clar. Press).  
 Swete: *Septuagint*, vol. ii. (Camb. Univ. Press).  
 Watts: *New Apologetic* (T. & T. Clark).  
 Wordsworth: *Novum Testamentum Secundum editionem S. Hieronymi* (Clar. Press).  
 Wright, Dr. W.: *Comp. Gram. of Semitic Languages* (Camb. Univ. Press).

**Dr. Hutchison Stirling's Gifford Lectures** (*Philosophy and Theology*), being the first Edinburgh University Gifford Lectures. By James Hutchison Stirling, LL.D. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 9s.) has just been received, much too late for adequate notice this month. But having opened the book by the merest chance at p. 120, we fell upon a passage which has so close a bearing upon the note in our October issue upon Dr. Stirling and Carlyle, that we shall give it here.

#### Carlyle and Goethe.

Speculating on the relation between two men, in many respects so unlike each other, I had, in my own mind, referred the source of it to that part of *Wilhelm Meister's Travels*, where one of the Heads of an Educational Institute, conducting Wilhelm from hall to hall, prelects equably on the various religions. To read this was a new experience to Carlyle. As his early letters tell us, the perusal of Gibbon had won him over to the side of heresy; and any further progression in the same direction could only exhibit to him Christianity—in Hume, Voltaire, and the Encyclopædists, say—as an object, not of derision merely, but even of the fiercest hatred and the most virulent abuse. This, then, as on the part of these Germans, was a novel experience to Carlyle—the dispassionate, open-eyed, significant wisdom of such tolerant and temperate discourse even in respect of the Christian religion; and it was as with the light and the joy of a new revelation that he returned, *at least to all the feeling and the reverence and the awe*, that had been *his* in his boyhood under the eye of his father. And so it was that the first aim of Carlyle, as in the *Sartor Resartus*, was the re-establishment in every earnest, educated, but doubting soul, of the vital reality of true religion. In that work, to such souls wandering in the dark, the light of Carlyle suddenly strook through the black of night as with the coming of a celestial messenger. "It is the night of the world," they heard, "and still long till it be day: we wander amid the glimmer of smoking ruins, and the sun and the stars of heaven are as blotted out for a season; and two immeasurable phantoms, Hypocrisy and Atheism, with the ghoul Sensuality, stalk abroad over the earth, and call it theirs: well at ease are the sleepers for