

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

At the annual general meeting of the Palestine Exploration Fund, Sir Charles Wilson gave an address on the discoveries in Palestine during the preceding year. His address is published in the *Quarterly Statement* for October.

The discoveries have been made at Gezer. Other discoveries have been made in Palestine by other discoverers. Dr. Sellin has made discoveries at Taanach. But the discoveries made by Mr. Stewart Macalister at Gezer are the discoveries of the Palestine Exploration Fund, and they are great enough to warrant the enthusiasm of the Fund at their annual meeting.

Mr. Stewart Macalister is evidently an ideal explorer. He can dig and he can decipher. And, 'I think,' says Sir Charles Wilson, 'we may absolutely depend upon his judgment whenever he says that a particular object belongs to a Jewish or a Canaanite period.' He has added some chapters to the history of Palestine and some chapters to the history of Religion in the world. He has succeeded in showing that Gezer has been occupied by men from the Neolithic Age down to the time of the Maccabees.

There are seven periods of occupation. The lowest strata of débris reveal two periods belonging to an aboriginal non-Semitic race. They were

of slight build. None exceeded 5 feet 7 inches in stature, and most were under 5 feet 4 inches. They lived in caves, and cremated their dead.

When the third period opens a new race appears. The cave-dwellers have been dispossessed by a Semitic people who lived in houses of mud and stone, crowded together like any modern village in Palestine, and surrounded with a wall. They were taller than the cave-dwellers, from 5 feet 7 inches to 5 feet 11 inches in height, and their skulls were well developed, their racial type being not unlike that of the modern Arab. They did not cremate but buried their dead, sometimes using the crematorium caves of the aborigines as their sepulchres.

When they buried their dead the Semites of these two periods (sometimes, at any rate) buried food and weapons with them. Their weapons were of exceptionally fine bronze. Terra-cotta plaques, with figures of the goddess Ashtoreth in low relief, have been found in abundance, and every plaque is broken, as if some rite demanded the fracture of the goddess's image. The finds bring out a connexion at this time with Egypt, for there are many scarabs and impressions of scarab-seals of the Middle Empire. There are Babylonian and Syrian cylinders also. And in the

upper stratum of the two the pottery shows the influence of Ægean art.

These pre-Israelite Semites of Gezer had their Bamah or High Place. This is Mr. Macalister's great discovery in the débris belonging to the third period of occupation. It consists of a group of monoliths, from 5 feet 5 inches to 10 feet 9 inches high, aligned in a gentle curve of which the chord is nearly north and south. It stood on the saddle between the two knolls. Inside was found the skull of a man of alien race. Sir Charles Wilson recalls the statement that the head of Goliath was brought to Jerusalem and buried there.

The fifth and sixth strata represent the occupation of Gezer by the Israelites. In the fifth layer the High Place begins to lose a little of its sanctity; private houses encroach upon its precincts. This city was destroyed by the Pharaoh whose daughter was given in marriage to Solomon. When Solomon rebuilt it he restricted its area, which in the sixth stratum covers only the western knoll, and enclosed it with a wall. The sixth period is the period of the kings. Jar handles have royal stamps with the legend 'To the king' upon them. Before it ends the High Place has lost almost all, if not all, its sanctity, a result which Sir Charles Wilson thinks may have been due to the reforming zeal of Josiah.

If the third and fourth periods had their surprise in the discovery of the High Place of Gezer, the fifth and sixth periods have a greater surprise. Under the foundation of the houses are found deposits of lamps and bowls. They are of various sizes, and of different patterns. Sometimes they are single; often one large lamp or bowl has smaller lamps or bowls within it. What were these lamps and bowls for, and why were they placed under the foundations of the houses? Sir Charles Wilson cannot answer these questions. But in the same *Statement* Mr. Macalister himself suggests an answer. For in the same *Statement* is published Mr. Macalister's latest report of his excavations;

it is occupied chiefly with these lamps and bowls, and it associates them with another discovery made in the same Israelite periods of occupation, a discovery that is much more astonishing.

It is the discovery that when the Israelites laid the foundation of a house they buried an infant beneath it. The infant was probably alive when they buried it there. At first, at any rate, it was probably alive. Mr. Macalister believes that he can trace successive stages in the practice of this rite, each stage being less barbarous and more symbolical. And with this evolution of the sacrifice he associates the bowl and lamp deposits.

The Israelites began their occupation of Palestine with rites which they afterwards abhorred. Like the nations around them they laid the foundation of their homes in blood. It was a religious ceremony. And in so far as it was a religious ceremony they put us to shame; for we consider God when the foundation-stone of our churches is laid, but forget Him when we begin to build our homes. It was a religious ceremony. And its manner was in accordance with the religion of the time. Infant sacrifice was common. An infant, probably alive, was laid beneath the wall. That was the first step.

The second step was taken when the infant was slain and its body put into a jar before burial. Several jars have been found with the bones of infants in them. In one instance the bones of two infants have been found in one jar. Mr. Macalister believes that they were twins. These jars were then placed under the wall, either at the corners of houses or chambers, or else under the jambs of the doors.

A third step in the evolution of this religious rite was taken when other jars, probably containing food for the victim, were placed beside the jar which contained its body. Then came the great change. The fourth step was the abolition of the human sacrifice. Instead of a jar containing an

infant, there was placed a bowl containing blood (or grape juice as a substitute for blood) and a lamp. The blood was a symbol of the sacrifice, the lamp was a symbol of fire. Last of all, the victim and the blood were omitted, the symbolic lamps and bowls were deposited alone.

In these fifth and sixth periods the pottery is mostly of the Jewish pattern. Iron is in use, but weapons of bronze are still common, and even flint implements have not altogether disappeared. The flint objects are of inferior workmanship however, as if the art of working in stone had been lost. There are proofs that the prophets had reason for their denunciation of idolatry. Among the discoveries are a fine bronze statuette of Osiris, with remains of gilding, and a bronze statuette of Ashtoreth Karnaim, or the horned Astarte. It is the only perfect image of that goddess that has yet been found. The horns, says Sir Charles Wilson, seem to represent rams' horns and not the crescent moon.

The top stratum represents the occupation of Gezer that followed the Captivity. The change is most instructive. Iron is the metal in common use, bronze being employed only for ornament, and flint is unknown. But more than that, idolatry has come to an end. There are no more statuettes of Astarte, there are no more infants' bones, the bowls and the lamps have all disappeared; there is no trace of worship in connexion with the High Place. At the north end of the High Place some of the great stones have been deliberately destroyed. Mr. Macalister believes that it was the work of Simon Maccabæus, who cast out all the pollutions of Gezer and placed such men there as would keep the law.

In the *Church Quarterly Review* for July there is an article dealing exclusively with the volume of sermons by the late Professor A. B. Davidson, of which the title is, *The Called of God*. It is an article by an English Churchman and by an

adherent of the High Church party. But the writer appreciates Dr. Davidson. He sees him 'possessed of strong independence, not to say individualism, of character, mingled with a no less strong sense of ancestry and home affection, which belongs to the best Scottish type.' And he sees that such a spirit was peculiarly in sympathy with the Hebrew prophets, and was called to be their interpreter.

There are two things that are characteristic of the Hebrew prophets and of Professor Davidson. There is the wistfulness with which they looked out upon the mystery of the world, and there is the unwavering trust in the unchanging God which they brought to the solution of life's perennial problems. The Hebrew prophets were not philosophers; Dr. Davidson was not a philosopher. He insists that even Job will have nothing to do with 'abstract philosophizing.' He never philosophizes himself. In this lay the most marked distinction between him and his predecessor, 'Rabbi' Duncan. Duncan grasped things in their totality. His mind was the mind of a systematic theologian. In Davidson's sermons there is no systematic theology. His approach to religion was that of concrete personal experience and human need. 'God's voice,' he said—this is from the sermon on the Call of Abraham—'is self-evidencing. It approves itself to man as the voice of God. Abraham had evidence which he could not resist.'

Davidson, says this anonymous reviewer, resembled the Hebrew prophets in the wistfulness with which he looked out upon the mystery of life. He did not philosophize about it. He saw it, and he saw God in it, and he waited. And this did not make life less to him but greater. Do you remember the sermon upon Saul's Reprobation?—'It is not amiss for us just to stand before this spectacle of a great human misery, a perplexed unhappy life, even where one should have supposed all the elements of happiness were present. Such a sight gives us thoughts of life not without

use to us, and makes us wonder at the elements of misery enwrought into it, and life becomes to us something more mysterious, greater, less trivial; and the higher the mind, and the more lofty the part in life, the more and greater seem to be the possibilities of wretchedness. Life seems at first sight like the bright sunlight, one single element of brightness; yet, when in maturer years we analyse it, we discover it to be made up of many varied colours, and between the colours there are dark unresolvable lines that will yield to no analysis. In human life there are mysterious veins of misery, do what you will.'

The *Church Quarterly* reviewer does not altogether approve of that. Dr. Davidson was as the Hebrew prophet, and saw the misery of life. He saw also with the prophet the mercy of God. He saw that the mercy was sufficient for the misery. But he should have gone beyond the Hebrew prophet. He should have passed into the New Testament and found that sufficient mercy has become Christian joy. 'The facts of the gospel,' says the reviewer, 'have surely power, not merely to countervail, but to transfigure the sorrows of the world.'¹

'I am wondering,' writes Professor Ramsay to Dr. Sanday,—'From the words in your preface about Capernaum, I am wondering whether you

¹ Is the *Church Quarterly* reviewer right? It is not jealousy for a great reputation that makes us ask, it is not that alone. But is he right? For the most part, it may be conceded, Davidson did look out upon the wrestle of life. He was deeply interested in Saul and Isaiah's choice young men who sometimes utterly fall. And he did so because he saw the reality of life's struggle as few have seen it. He saw that a man had to undertake it for himself, that the mercy of God did not deliver from the severity of the temptation a man had to master. But it is altogether wrong, as it seems to us, to think that he saw nothing in God but a readiness to meet life's failures with sufficient mercy. He saw God rejoicing in the victory not less than pardoning the defeat. Another volume of sermons is about to be published, under the title of *Waiting upon God*. We have had the privilege of reading that volume in proof. One of the sermons is on the Temptation of our Lord, and these words occur in it:—

'The next lesson is the joy that comes when temptation is

are going through the same process as I did; namely, a first impression in favour of *Khân Minyeh* gradually giving way to the arguments for *Tell Hâm*.'

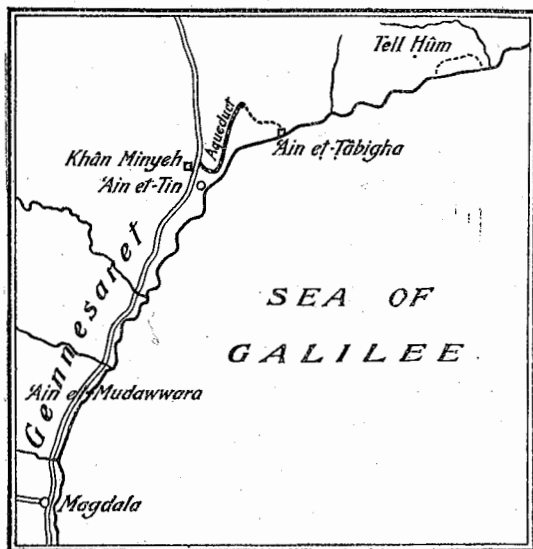
Dr. Sanday went to Palestine last summer with one subject very much in his thoughts, the question as to the true site of Capernaum. The question, he says, affects the very heart of our Lord's ministry, and he was specially anxious to reach a clear decision upon it. But when he came back he 'could not feel that all the difficulties were removed or that the question was wholly solved.' In the preface to his book, *Sacred Sites of the Gospels* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), and as his last word on the subject, he said: 'Of all the decisions that I had come to, the site of Capernaum is that as to which my own doubts are strongest.' It was in reference to that sentence that Professor Ramsay wrote to him.

For, on the whole, Dr. Sanday had decided in his book in favour of *Khân Minyeh*. For one thing, he was impressed by the weight of authority in its favour. He exhibited the history of opinion very clearly by means of a comparative table. But let us first of all see where *Khân Minyeh* and *Tell Hâm* lie.

For that purpose we shall refer to an article on this question which Professor Sanday has contributed to the current issue of the *Journal of Theo-*

overcome. It is said: The devil leaveth Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him. Neither men nor angels helped Him when tempted. God seemed to stand aside and watch the struggle. A father will watch with intensest absorption the trial of his children, see the higher principles called out by the emergency, see them wrestle with the lower desires, and finally rise to preponderance and gain the victory. Joyful will be the moment when he clasps a victorious child in his arms. Joyful the moment for the child, joyful for the feeling of higher sympathy. The angels ministered to Christ. They brought Him that which He needed. When we have carried on a long struggle, and have been pinched or in distress, and have felt as if we must give way, and have only been upheld by every hour naming God, saying, God is able, God will not fail us; then, when the relief comes at last, there is a strange sense that it has come direct from God,—angels come and minister to us.'

logical Studies. The article is written to register a change of opinion, to which we shall come in a moment. In that article Dr. Sanday gives a sketch map of the locality. Here it is—



Khân Minyeh, we see, lies between *Magdala* and *Tell Hâm*. It is fully three miles from the former and scarcely two from the latter place. If you have arrived at *Khân Minyeh* and are to proceed to *Tell Hâm*, you leave the road and pass through a curious cutting in the rock. This cutting is some three feet deep and wide. Dr. Sanday believes that it was originally an aqueduct, used for conveying water from the fine springs of *et-Tâbigha* to the plain behind. This *et-Tâbigha* was once known as Heptapegon, or Seven Springs, and the Arabic is clearly a corruption of the Greek name. After less than two miles' walk you reach *Tell Hâm*.

Now in the contest between these two places for the site of Capernaum, *Tell Hâm* has the first advantage in its name. It is objected that there is no *tell*, that is, no hill or mound at hand, and that the name is a corruption for *Tanhum* or *Tenhum*. Dr. Sanday put the question directly to his dragoman, 'an intelligent specimen of his class,' whether the site could possibly be described as a *tell*, and he answered decidedly, No.

For all that, *Tell Hâm* has the advantage of the name. It is possible, and may easily be considered probable, that *Caphar Nahum*, or Village of Nahum, that is, Capernaum, passed on Arabic lips into *Tell Hâm*, or Nahum's Mound of Ruins.

In picturesqueness, if there is any argument in that, *Khân Minyeh* has it. Says Dr. Sanday in his book: 'One would like to think that the true site was *Khân Minyeh*. As I stood on the ruins of the *khân*, the landscape that stretched before my eyes was, I thought, the most beautiful that met them in the whole of Palestine. The contrast of the rich dark green of the plain with the bold precipices of *Wâdy el-Hamâm* rising straight in front, and fringed on the one side by the curving shore and on the other by the gently swelling uplands, was a thing not to be forgotten. It spoke of something more than the variety of nature. It hinted also at the infinite variety in the lives and characters of men. I had not realized that Capernaum was full in view of a famous haunt of robbers, a haunt perhaps also of desperate patriots. Among the peaceful fisher-folks and tillers of the soil, and among the gay coloured caravans of traders coming and going, there must have been felt the stress of sterner and fiercer passions; and such surroundings were a fit home for Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost.'

For beauty of situation *Khân Minyeh* has it. But beauty of situation does not settle it. Dr. Sanday does not use that as an argument. The site cannot be found by appealing to one's sentiment. And for that matter we do not lose the sentiment if we fix upon *Tell Hâm*; for the distance between the two places, we remember, is less than two miles. Besides the name, there is really only another argument that bears upon the question. It is the argument from the statements of early travellers.

Of these the first is Josephus. The words of Josephus are: 'Besides the good temperature of the air, it is also watered from a most fertilizing

fountain. The people of the country call it Capharnaum.' This fountain, as all agree, is *'Ain et-Ṭābigħa*. Now *'Ain et-Ṭābigħa* is nearer *Khān Minyeh* than *Tell Hūm*, say three-quarters of a mile from the former and a mile and quarter from the latter. More than that, the waters of *et-Ṭābigħa* could not be carried to the higher ground of *Tell Hūm* to water it; whereas the very aqueduct is still in existence which carried them to *Khān Minyeh* and the fertile plain behind. Josephus seems to favour the claim of *Khān Minyeh*, and even to decide the claim in its favour.

But only so long as we forget that when Josephus spoke of Capernaum he included the country round. The cities and large villages of Galilee were not bounded by a ring fence, but each had its territory, extending for some miles round the place itself. 'I have frequently pointed out,' says Professor Ramsay, 'in my *Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, examples of error caused by our assuming that a name means the actual town, when the ancient writer means the whole territory of the town.' In the language of Josephus 'Capharnaum' would cover *'Ain et-Ṭābigħa*, if Capernaum were *Tell Hūm*, and the springs of *'Ain et-Ṭābigħa*, though a mile and quarter away, would quite naturally be called 'the Fountain of Capharnaum.'

Only another witness is worth calling. It is Theodosius. 'From Tiberias to Magdala, where the lady Mary was born,' says Theodosius (530 A.D.), 'is two [Roman] miles. From Magdala to Seven Fountains [Heptapegon], where the Lord Christ baptized the apostles, is two miles, where he also fed the people with five loaves and two fishes. From Seven Fountains to Capharnaum is two miles.' Theodosius is wrong in his distance between Magdala and Seven Fountains, that is, *'Ain et-Ṭābigħa* or Heptapegon. The distance is more than two miles. But he is right in his estimate of the distance between Seven Fountains and Capernaum, if Capernaum was at *Tell Hūm*. And that it was at *Tell Hūm* was clearly his

opinion. For to speak of two miles from Seven Fountains to *Khān Minyeh* is impossible, and what is most important of all, *Khān Minyeh* is not so far on the way as Seven Fountains. If Theodosius meant *Khān Minyeh* when he spoke of Capernaum, he would have been turning back again, before he went on, as he afterwards did, to Bethsaida and to Panias.

To Professor Ramsay's mind Theodosius settles it. 'Theodosius came to Heptapegon, and moving on to the north, reached Capernaum. That class of argument is in my experience the most unshakable and safe to rest upon.' Dr. Sanday is also satisfied. He writes his article in the *Journal of Theological Studies* for the purpose of saying that his mind is at rest.

The complaint of the empty pew is old. For a little time now we have been hearing the complaint of the empty pulpit. Men are not coming forward to fill the pulpit. In every Protestant country there has been a falling off in the number of 'candidates for the Holy Ministry.'

What is the cause, and what is the remedy to be? A presbytery of the Church of Scotland—the Presbytery of Hamilton—has taken the matter into serious consideration, and has issued a 'Report.' The report is divided into two parts—Probable Causes and Suggested Remedies. It is most business-like and exhaustive. All the causes must be in it, and some of the remedies. We could not improve upon it. But if we might dare to condense it, we would say that men do not come forward as candidates now *either because preaching is no longer worth living by, or because it is no longer worth living for.*

Preaching is no longer worth living by. To the men who look upon it as one of the professions it has lost its attractiveness. The Presbytery of Hamilton makes that quite plain. The preparation is too long; the prospect of promotion is too

doubtful; the remuneration is too small. If we are to attract the men who want something to live by, we must shorten the curriculum, invent a system of 'translation,' and pay a living wage.

But preaching is also no longer worth living for. This is not the chief cause of the dearth of candidates, but it is the cause of the loss of the best candidates. We do not say that preaching ought not to be worth living by, but we do say that it ought always to be worth living for. It does not seem to be worth living for in our day.

There is no excitement in it. Men will sacrifice anything for excitement—money, reputation, comfort. Preachers are not wholly free from the love of a little excitement in their lives. They used to get it in conversion, but there are no conversions now. Some of them found it in the Church courts. There are those who still take their excitement in that way. But the Church courts furnish sufficient excitement to draw candidates for the ministry only when great movements are afloat. There are no great movements now. A 'Smith Heresy' is settled by a single vote. A Disruption is not due.

And there is no joy in it. The best men have always been above the necessity of living *by* their profession, but they must have a profession to live for. If it means self-denial they are ready for that. But there must be joy in the self-denial. The Free Churchmen in the 'forties, the High Churchmen in the 'seventies, took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. It does not matter what it means if there is joy in it. There is no joy in the Christian ministry now. Men dare not preach what they believe; there is no joy in that: or they take care not to believe what they dare not preach; and there is no joy in that.

Men dare not preach what they believe, or they take care not to believe what they dare not preach. Is that true? It does not matter whether it is true or not for what we are speaking about. We

are speaking about the dearth of candidates for the Holy Ministry. And it is enough that those young men who should become candidates—the best young men, who want something to live *for*—think that at the present time preachers dare not preach what they believe, or take care not to believe what they dare not preach.

The two things that men dare not preach are Evolution and the Higher Criticism. By Evolution is meant all that modern science has to say about the origin of man, the fact of sin, the fall, the future. By Higher Criticism is meant all that modern scholarship has to say about the Bible. But, we say in self-defence, our business is to preach the gospel. Neither Evolution nor the Higher Criticism is the gospel, and it is absurd to condemn us for not preaching what it is not our business to preach. That is true. But it is not a defence. We cannot preach the gospel without touching these things. The moment we touch them we are tested. The modern evolutionist may say that sin is simply self, its expression is the inevitable inheritance from our past ancestry. We cannot preach the gospel without touching sin. We either accept that estimate of sin or we reject it. Again, our message is in the Word. Is it possible for us to preach the gospel without showing what authority the written Word has upon us? If we conceal our mind on these things, or if on these things our mind is not at rest, then there is no joy in our preaching, and the young man who might have become a candidate for the Holy Ministry sees it.

The Headmaster of The Leys School, Cambridge, has published in the *Preacher's Magazine* for October a sermon on Heredity. His text is the text from which all heredity sermons are preached: 'What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this

proverb in Israel.' That is Ezekiel's form of it (18^{2, 3}). Either in that form or in Jeremiah's (31^{29, 30}) it is the heredity text always.

It is a text that seems to deny heredity. The denial is more emphatic in Jeremiah: 'But every one shall die for his own iniquity; every man that eateth the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.' The text has to be explained first by its occasion. If the prophets seem to deny heredity, it cannot be urged that they knew nothing of science. For evidently they and all Israel had got this scientific thought so well by heart that it stood as one of their popular proverbs. The question for these prophets was not, Do we inherit anything from our fathers, but Do we inherit everything? And they answered, We do not.

Israel was in captivity. The good had been carried away with the bad. The good suffered from the carrying away far more than the bad did. It was only the Israelite who delighted in the law of God who could resolve: 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.' But it was a mistake of the good in Israel to blame their fathers or their ill-doing neighbours exclusively. The proverb was true, but it was too often on their lips. When the fathers eat sour grapes, the children's teeth *are* set on edge; but it is time for these captive Israelites to understand that the other side is true also. It is time for them to say, not only 'I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips,' but also 'I am a man of unclean lips.'

Heredity is true. 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'—the proverb is quite true. But it is not the whole truth. The children's inheritance is something for the temptations of life to fasten upon. It may make life's temptations keener on this side or on that. But it does not give them their victory. Only the acquiescence of the will does that. And the will of the individual is his own.

Life is better for its temptations. It would be

a poor thing without its temptations. And temptation, to be a force in life, must be dangerous. Heredity gives temptation its opportunity of becoming dangerous. The drunkard's child is not born a drunkard, but he may be tempted intensely to drink. The strength of his character will be the greater because of the intensity of his temptation, if he resists the temptation. And he may resist the temptation. His will is his own.

But our hereditary inheritance is not all evil. Mr. Barber is wise to insist on that. It may be that the father was a drunkard, but the grandfather has also to be taken into account. And the great-grandfather. And you cannot stop there. Go on, says Mr. Barber. You speak as if the gutter child's heredity was only evil. Carry it back far enough, and what do you find? The poor, pale-faced, rickety, bow-legged child of the drunkard in the gutter—carry his ancestry back, carry it back far enough, and you find, 'which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.'

That is quite scientific. Matthew's genealogy begins with Abraham, and you say that is provincial, that is Jewish. Well, Matthew wrote his gospel for Jews. But Luke begins with God. He wrote his gospel for all mankind, and he is thoroughly scientific. You may say that this first ancestor is too far away to affect the gutter child's heredity. Has science formed a table of heredity then? Can it tell the exact degree of each ancestor's influence? Has it discovered that the pressure of influence is in exact proportion to the nearness of relationship? Science has made no such discovery. It says no such thing. But it does say that an ancestor of strongly marked character will reappear in his far-off descendants, when the intermediate and colourless progenitors have left no impression. It is a long way to carry back the gutter child's ancestry, is it? But carry it back to God and you have an ancestor who made His impression.

For our inheritance is not all evil. 'Which was

the Son of God.' What does that mean? It means, says Mr. Barber, that in me, degraded and obscure as I may be, with all the evil tendency which went to make me, there is something hidden, a power of righteousness, a power of seeing right and wrong, a grand tendency to God. And he thinks that we might do worse than go to the drunkard who quotes the proverb, 'the fathers have eaten sour grapes,' and ask him to carry his doctrine of heredity all the way—'which was the son of God.'

And then heredity has a fellow. It is not all our possessions. Heredity is within. There is also a force that touches life from without. Mr. Barber recalls the plot of *Elsie Venner*, that story into which Oliver Wendell Holmes poured his whole philosophy of life. Elsie Venner's mother is bitten by a rattlesnake before the child

is born. The snake-nature enters somewhat into the nature of the child. She struggles with that inheritance till she reaches womanhood. Would she have won or would she have lost? We are not told. But we are told that she was not left to struggle alone. With womanhood there came from without the pure love of the young man for the maiden. His love enfolds her, fights for her, fights with her, and they win together. 'I have been stung,' says Mr. Barber, 'by the scorpion sin. It has been a life's struggle. All through life I have felt it. I feel it still. But love comes and love enfolds me. I could not do it alone, but when the glorious love comes from the Cross and is thrown around me, and I feel the thrill of that strong power within me, then I can do it. I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me.'

The Spiritual Discipline of Science.

BY THE REV. J. CAMPBELL GIBSON, D.D., SWATOW.

'Lo, these are but the outskirts of His ways:
And how small a whisper do we hear of Him!
But the thunder of His power who can understand?'—Job xxvi. 14.

LIVING, as we do, in an age of science, we cannot escape the influences of our time. There may be dangers in these influences which we cannot avoid, but there are also elements of help and stimulus which we cannot afford to lose. These influences are not therefore to be deplored, but weighed and wisely used as a spiritual discipline for the perfecting of faith and the refining of Christian character.

When we were children we were told that the bread on our father's table was the gift of God. As we grew older we found that the bread came from the baker, that the baker had his flour from the miller, that the miller had his wheat from the farmer, and that the farmer got it by hard toil in ploughing and sowing. So in all directions in our later life God seems to hide Himself behind His works, until men begin to think that the more they know of other things the less can they know of God.

So in the history of intellectual growth. Men at first thought of God's intervention as direct

and immediate, and when they embarked on the scientific study of the world it was with the feeling that at every stage their researches would reveal to them God. At first, indeed, in such studies it seemed as if these hopes must be largely fulfilled. Beautiful adaptations, instances of design, marvellous correlations for beneficent purposes, immediately presented themselves, and men's conceptions of the power, the benevolence, and the wisdom of God were greatly enlarged.

But as these studies went more to the heart of things, unexpected difficulties arose.

One set of these difficulties was disconcerting when it first came into view, but has not proved to be of very permanent importance. It threatened to assail the authority of Scripture. God, speaking to men in the Scriptures, had of necessity accommodated His utterance to human thought and language. The references to His great works of creation and providence were made in the current