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OBSERVATIONS.

An Old Theology.

The "Lectures on Theology" by the Reverend Charles G. Finney, sometime president of Oberlin college, illustrates completely and conclusively the theology of fifty years ago. President Finney was a bold good man with absolute faith in the Bible. If his sense of justice was occasionally hard to reconcile with a statement in the Bible, his sense of justice suffered, not the Bible. In accepting the Bible as a guide he accepted everything between the covers of the authorized version.

The Presbyterian church is at last about to revise the creed in regard to foreordination. President Finney's belief in regard to the damnation of a part of the human race is thus stated: "It is often asked, 'Is it our duty to pray the prayer of faith for the salvation of all men?' I answer No; for that is not a thing according to the will of God. It is directly contrary to his revealed will. We have no evidence that all will be saved. We should feel benevolent to all, and in itself considered, desire their salvation. But God has revealed it to us that many of the human race shall be damned. And it can not be a duty to believe that they shall be saved in the face of a revelation to the contrary. * * * Christians will not offer the prayer of faith for all, because there is no evidence that God intends to save all men. * * Why is it that so many pious praying parents have had impenitent children that die in their sins? Let God be true, but every man a liar. Which shall we believe, that God's promise has failed, or that these parents did not do their duty? Wherever you find a professor that does not believe

in the prayer of faith, you find as a general thing, that he has children and domestics yet in their sins."

The preachers of Dr. Finney's day and type talked about salvation and damnation. These two words occur repeatedly in old sermons. Only the crudest preachers, laboring with primary congregations, attempt to influence them nowadays by threats of future punishment or promises of future citizenship in a gold-paved city walled with jasper, whose gates are kept by a winged sergent-at-arms. Salvation, or the redemption of man from the bondage of sin and liability to eternal death, and the conferring on him of everlasting happiness, is not the argument it used to be. In negro churches and among the baptists and methodists of isolated mountain regions, it is said that the fervent itinerant preachers still threaten hell and promise heaven. Urban preachers exhort men to treat their neighbors justly, to forgive, and to live righteously, not on account of punishment or reward after death but for the good of the world, for a permanent improvement of the average now. The modern preacher leaves (with as perfect a faith as the old one) rewards, and punishments of the dead to the Lord. The modern preacher is not so sure about the place, the kind and degree of reward and punishment. It is difficult to get him to say just what he believes about it. He thinks the life after death not much of his business, and devotes himself with all earnestness to inducing his parishioners to treat each other and the rest of the world justly and even generously. Talk to him about salvation except as it relates to the present deliverance from sin and the immediate enjoyment of an idle inheritance and he is vague. Most of the ministers nowadays believe and preach that the kingdom of heaven is at hand and may begin when each may choose. As for death they regard it lightly and as a change of no dreadful character. All their talk is of a present salvation, of earthly punishment for wickedness and meanness, of the loss a man suffers in this life for refusing his inheritance, of turning aside a waiting happiness. The vague expression that comes into the preacher's eyes when a sinner begins to talk about his fear of everlasting punishment and of what will torture his soul when his body is turning back to dust, is not an accident. The Methodist, the Congregationalist, the Presbyterian, and of course, the Unitarian minister, bring the conversation back to the present, and local conduct of life. There are rigid believers whose point of view has unconsciously changed. They have not missed the talk about salvation because they no longer think the state of mind a man dies in so important as the way he has lived. Yet if questioned about foreordination they assert the same old doctrines and assent to the damnation of about two-

thirds of the human creation. But try the ministers! Their replies will show the real distance between the old and the new preaching.

Mrs. Nation's Raid.

By smashing bars and saloon fixtures in Kansas, Mrs. Nation has encouraged the conservative people who disapprove of saloons to insist that the law prohibiting them be enforced. The Kansas legislature has enacted a law, depriving saloon-keepers of a trial by jury, conferring upon the prosecuting attorney inquisitorial rights and making the possession of a government liquor license, or of a bar and saloon fixtures *prima facie* evidence of the illegal intent of the owner. Also empowering anyone to enjoin any man found with saloon fixtures in his possession against continuing in the saloon business, under penalty of punishment for contempt of court. The legislature was induced to make this law through pressure of public opinion which was aroused by the followers of Mrs. Nation, who in turn were convinced of the efficacy of the law to prohibit saloons, by the spectacle of the powerlessness of the judge to punish her and by the spectacle of the paralyzed Kansas governor when Mrs. Nation asked him why he did not enforce the laws he had taken the solemnest oath to observe. Mrs. Nation has exercised the same influence upon people opposed to saloons that John Brown did upon the anti-slavery cult. She has shown them the panic that a poor half-crazy but fearless woman can cause the governor and all minor officials in collusion with the law-breakers. She has shown sane, conservative people the weakness and cowardice of an illegal business and her violence may have the far-reaching consequences of John Brown's raid.

Mr. Wm. Allen White in a luminous review of Mrs. Nation's raid in a recent Saturday Evening Post says:

"There can be no longer the least excuse for officers or citizens winking at violations of the prohibitory law in Kansas. All this the woman with the hatchet has done—by indirection. For she set out to defy the law and she has strengthened the law. But has not Mrs. Nation made a larger investment which shall return in a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory? God moves in a mysterious way. This is true whether one thinks of God as an omnipotent, omniscient personality, even as the orthodox God, or whether one feels that God is only a 'stream of tendency.' But God moves and moves forward. And when one considers what poor sticks of men have carried God's banner—the insane, the brutal, the ignorant, the lame and the halt and the blind, but always the brave—one pauses before condemning even the most despised of creatures as unfit for the work. Did the savage veneration of the insane arise from the possible fact that

too many of those who seemed mad and were stoned to death have proved that they were prophets? Are not inflamed nerves supersensitive to waves of feeling that precede great moral changes? It is altogether impossible that this frantic, brawling, hysterical woman in the Kansas jail, brave, indomitable, consecrated to her God, may be a prophetess whose signs and wonders shall be read and known of man by the light of another day?"

A Great Scholar.

That profound scholar, that most accurate workman of the nineteenth century, the author of the "Constitutional History of England," and of "Select Charters," Bishop Stubbs of England, has recently died. He possessed supernatural patience, the abiding enthusiasm of an antiquary, he was a collector of institutional facts. His "Constitutional History of England," in four thick volumes, with the half of each page devoted to foot-notes quoting authorities, is a standard work in all colleges. But in spite of learning, brilliancy, the devotion of an antiquarian and a talent for assorting facts, he had not the gift of vitalizing them. His style is denuded of personality, correct, faultless, yet it is impossible to read the "Constitutional History of England" without weariness. Like those handsome faces drawn by phrenologists or art teachers for illustrations of the fifths into which the human head is divided, Mr. Stubbs' chapters are lacking in warmth, color, and that peculiar variation called human. Students of constitutional history remember Stubbs with gratitude after they have finished studying his valuable works; but while in close personal contact with Stubbs they do not feel the admiration for him that his devotion to the institutions of England deserves.

Paul Potter, the dramatist, who was once a student of Stubbs, always held that there was material for a great melodrama in the "Select Charters." A play-wright like Paul Potter, in pursuit of material for a play, might be able to keep hold of the human thread and not lose sight of the human interest in "Select Charters;" but to the ordinary student the dramatic possibilities in "Select Charters" are completely hidden. I believe the students of the University of Nebraska have no longer a painful acquaintance with Stubbs. They consult, as Stubbs did, the original sources, and make their own deductions with more originality, if with less accuracy than the good Bishop. I am sorry he is gone, but glad he will never write any more books on charters or institutions.

Primrose Day.

When Lord Beaconsfield died, the Queen, grateful for having been made an Empress, sent a wreath of primroses to be placed on his coffin. Attached to the wreath was a card that