

Echoes of Religious Thought.

BY W. K. AZBILL.

"The Important Matter."

At the opening of the Anglican Church Synod last Monday night, Bishop Willis in his address introduced the subject of transference of the Church in Hawaii to the jurisdiction of the Episcopal Church of the United States as "the important matter." Space does not permit us to give the full text of his resolution and address, but the resolution approves of the transfer "whenever an invitation to the effect proceeds from the authorities of that Church to the Diocese of Honolulu, it being made clear at the same time that the interests of the Church in Hawaii shall be duly and sufficiently safeguarded and its integrity maintained, and that the support the Bishop and Clergy now receive from England will be continued by the Church in the United States until the Diocese or Missionary Jurisdiction of Honolulu becomes financially independent."

It is given out that Bishop Potter when here approved of these conditions, and it is practically certain that the change will ultimately be made.

In his comments on the position in which the Anglican Church in Hawaii is placed, Bishop Willis gives utterance to a fundamental truth of vast importance. He says:

In our own case, if we are of opinion that this Diocese should now become a diocese or missionary jurisdiction of the American Church, it is well to be sure that we stand on solid ground in holding that opinion. On what basis does such an opinion rest? It is well to ask that question because some seem to think that the annexation of the Islands by the Government at Washington has already brought these Islands under the jurisdiction of the Church in the United States. To hold this would be to regard the Kingdom of Christ to be subordinate to earthly kingdoms and dependent on moves made by players on earth's political chessboard. Not directly the annexation of the Islands does not effect our position in the least. But it does so indirectly. It brings us into a new relation to the American branch of the Anglican communion, &c.

The Bishop, then, does not hold that Queen Victoria is the head of the Church in any proper sense. He does not think that bishops of churches of Christ are really entitled, by their rank as ministers of churches, to any place of authority or of power, or of distinction in the State. It is gratifying to note that his ideas are in such perfect accord with the prevailing notions of what he calls "the American Branch of the Anglican Church."

And by the way, if the Church is a divine institution, emanating from Heaven, why this persistent insistence that it is "of England?" We have "the Church of England in Jamaica," and "the Church of England in Honduras," and "the Anglican Church in Hawaii." Would it not be just as correct to say "the Church of Rome in Great Britain," when we mean "the Anglican Church?" While at it, the Bishop would render a great service by going on to point out the weaknesses and evils of the alliance of Church

and State, and the false notions of rank, authority, dominion and dignity that have come of this source.

Destructive Criticism Destroyed.

The destructive critics say that the book of Deuteronomy was written in the days of King Josiah, and they give the book this date because they say its professed predictions must have been written after the historical events which the author pretends to foretell. Indeed, this method of disposing of questions of date and authorship, is uniformly pursued by a class of the so-called higher critics. Accepting this date for the moment, Prof. J. W. McGarvey of the Bible College in Kentucky University, knocks the critics out on two scores. First, he says:

There is at least one which would be a clear case of inspired prediction, even had the book been written in the days of Josiah.

Among the calamities to Israel which, in a long and awe-inspiring series, are predicted in this chapter as consequences of disobedience, the Babylonian captivity is clearly indicated in verses 36 and 37: "Jehovah shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone. And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all the peoples whither Jehovah shall lead thee away." That this was the Babylonian captivity is evident from the two considerations that they were to be taken away with their king, which was only true of this captivity, and that this was to be done by a nation which neither they nor their fathers had known. This last could be said of the Babylonians, who had but recently come into power, but not of the Assyrians, who had been Israel's oppressors for several generations, and who had carried into captivity the ten northern tribes. Even this prediction could not have been uttered in the eighteenth year of Josiah, or at any previous date without miraculous foresight; for, first, the Assyrian Empire, to which Josiah rendered allegiance had not yet been overthrown by the Babylonians, and no human being could foresee that it ever would be. Second, no human foresight could reveal the future conquest of Judah by the Babylonians; and, third, it was impossible to know beforehand that the Jews would be transported to another land, and that their king should go into captivity with them.

But going still further with the *ad hominem*, the Professor shows in the second place that the destruction of Jerusalem, which was effected by the Romans in 70 A. D., is clearly predicted in the book. Here are his citation from the prophecy and his remarks upon it:

"Jehovah shall bring against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as the eagle flieth, a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand, a nation of fierce countenance, who shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young; and he shall eat the fruit of thy castle and the fruit of thy ground until thou be destroyed; which also shall not leave thee corn, wine or oil, the increase of thy kine, or the young of thy flock, until he have caused thee to perish. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down wherein thou trustedst throughout all thy land; and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout thy land which Jehovah thy God hath given thee. And thou shalt eat the fruit of thy own body, the flesh of thy sons and thy daughters which Jehovah thy God hath given thee, in the siege

and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall straiten thee. . . . And Jehovah shall scatter thee among all peoples, from the one end of the earth to the other end of the earth, and there shalt thou serve other gods which thou hast not known, nor thy father's, even wood and stone."

This captivity is clearly the one effected by the Romans; for among the nations that carried Israel, or any large portion of them, into captivity, the Romans alone were a nation "from afar, from the end of the earth;" and a nation whose tongue was utterly strange to Israel. Moreover, it was only in the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans that the besieged actually devoured some of their own children, as is here predicted, and as is asserted by Josephus, who was present when the ghastly remains of the children thus devoured were found by the Roman soldiers on searching the houses of the captured city. And, finally, it was the Romans alone who scattered Israel "among all peoples from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth."

Thus the destructive critics, by bringing out the book of Deuteronomy, B. C. 621, unwittingly leave it open to the same objection which caused them to surrender the accepted date and authorship. Of course, however, the date they have fixed (?) is the correct one, and now they may set themselves to the task of explaining how the author foresaw an event which was 691 years in the future when he wrote.

A Misrepresentation.

Dr. Bishop, in his paper, *The Friend*, set forth the following proposition:

"That a personal devil is actually stimulating the depravity of men, and organizing the forces of crime and wickedness, is a working hypothesis of no small utility."

The Editor of the *Advertiser* in the issue of the 11th inst., quoted this sentence, then related a story in which an insane Minister said that "the Devil is more useful than many of the Deacons," and then indicted the following diabolical misrepresentation:

This divine agreed with Dr. Bishop that the Devil was "a working hypothesis of no small utility," and as a useful member of society, had a most important part to play.

It is perfectly clear that Dr. Bishop speaks of the utility of the hypothesis, and not of the usefulness of Satan. Certainly he did not call the Devil "a working hypothesis." That this is a misrepresentation, any body can readily see. That it is a diabolical misrepresentation is a useful hypothesis; for, in the first place, this view of it accounts for the singular conduct of the Editor of the *Advertiser* in attempting to make Dr. Bishop appear ridiculous in the eyes of his readers, and in the second place, it illustrates the truth of what Dr. Bishop said.

If there is a personal devil who stimulates the depravity of men, then we are able on rational grounds to account for this misrepresentation on the part of the Editor of the morning paper; but if there is no such "spirit working in the children of disobedience," his conduct remains an enigma which baffles all efforts to understand.

Dean Swift is credited with "Bread is the staff of life."

It was Keats who said: "A thing of beauty is a joy forever."