

# The Great Text Commentary.

## THE GREAT TEXTS OF I. CORINTHIANS.

### I. COR. IV. 5.

Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God.—R.V.

1. THE doctrine of judgment was inherited by the Church from the Synagogue. In the Old Testament we can trace its gradual development, and in the apocalyptic literature, which was so copiously produced in the age immediately preceding the Advent of Christ, it attained remarkable prominence and distinctiveness. The New Testament takes up the tradition of Jewish doctrine, and makes to it an addition of the utmost importance by identifying the Lord of the prophets with the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Saviour clearly claimed for Himself the character of the Judge of mankind, and connected His Second Advent with the exercise of His judicial functions. The process of judgment is variously presented in the Gospels. In St. Matthew's Gospel the objective aspect is most emphasized, and we have the picture of 'the great Assize,' when 'the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him,' and shall pass sentence on 'all the nations.' In the Fourth Gospel Christ is represented as judging men inevitably by His word, which they receive or reject by an act of self-revelation. In one place we read that the Father 'hath given all judgment unto the Son'; and in another place of the same Gospel Christ is represented as disclaiming the purpose of judgment: 'I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.' The judgment proceeds as the natural consequence of His presence and teaching: 'He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day.' Thus the process of judgment is at once present and future. Day by day men judge themselves, but there is a 'last day' of final judgment, in which the tenor and effect of those unconscious self-judgments shall be declared. It is not altogether easy to combine these notions of judgment, but the Christian doctrine includes both, and can dispense with neither.

If we study carefully the Old Testament, we shall distinguish a twofold process of development in the doctrine of judgment. On the one hand, the Jews were gradually led to move from the notion of national to that of individual judgment. On the other hand, they were led to transfer the scene of final judgment from this life to the next, and to seek the triumph of Jehovah's righteousness not in time but in eternity. This twofold doctrinal advance was determined by the teaching of the prophets about God, and was assisted at every stage by the circumstances of the national history. As we study the writings of the Old Testament, we are conscious of a steady movement away from primitive and materialistic conceptions of the Godhead towards an ever more spiritual conception. In the greater prophets of Israel's later history we have attained to a Theistic belief which, until the Revelation in the Incarnate Son, cannot be transcended. It was on the basis of that prophetic Theism that Jesus Christ could prefer His own supreme claim on human faith: 'Ye believe in God,' He said, 'believe also in me.'

When we pass from the Old Testament to the New, we perceive that the prophetic doctrine is developed in two directions. In the first place, Jesus Christ is declared to be the Divine Judge of men. If in preaching to the Jews the Apostles were wont to place most emphasis on His Messiahship, in preaching to the Gentiles they insisted most on His judgeship. In the one case they were appealing to religious expectations rooted in the Scriptures, in the other they were addressing themselves to the conscience, stained and troubled with the consciousness of guilt. Messiahship, however, in the apocalyptic doctrine, included judgeship; and the Messianic Judge was clothed with Divine attributes. St. Paul does not hesitate to apply to our Saviour that term 'the Lord,' which, as a student of the Septuagint, he was accustomed to apply to Jehovah. The Divine Judgment which the prophets had taught him to expect was identified with that judgment of Christ which the evangelists assert that Christ Himself announced. This judgment would take place at the Parousia, or Second Advent of Christ, which the Apostolic

Church so ardently longed for, and which they believed was so near at hand. In the next place, the Divine Judgment was held to be primarily a judgment of individuals. This faith and longing sobered and strengthened them. Words which even now carry a solemn message were then heavily freighted with constraining counsel: 'We must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.'

2. This is the judgment to which St. Paul now appeals. For this judgment he bids the Corinthians wait. The Church at Corinth was honeycombed by the characteristic Greek vice of party spirit. The three great teachers, Paul, Peter, Apollos, were pitted against each other, and each was unduly exalted by those who swore by him, and unduly depreciated by the other two factions. But the men whose names were the war-cries of these sections were themselves knit in closest friendship, and felt themselves to be servants in common of one Master, and fellow-workers in one task. So Paul, in the immediate context, associating Peter and Apollos with himself, bids the Corinthians think of 'us' as being servants of Christ, and not therefore responsible to men; as stewards of the mysteries of God, that is, dispensers of truths long hidden but now revealed, and as therefore accountable for correct accounts and faithful dispensation only to the Lord of the household. Being responsible to Him, they heeded very little what others thought about them. Being responsible to Him, they could not accept vindication by their own consciences as being final. There was a judgment beyond these.

¶ Judgment to come is one of those things that need only to be wisely *asserted*. It does not need to be proved. Conscience will do that.<sup>1</sup>

¶ How shall the World be judged and by whom? Jesus Christ, that Word of God Which became Man, shall by the Power of His divine Stirring or Motion separate from Himself all that belongeth not to Him.<sup>2</sup>

Let us consider—

### I. The Quality of Christ's Judgment.

- i. Perfect in Knowledge.
- ii. Perfect in Equity.

### II. The Time of it.

<sup>1</sup> Principal Rainy, *Life*, i. 131.

<sup>2</sup> Jacob Behmen.

### I.

#### THE QUALITY OF CHRIST'S JUDGMENT.

Think of the difference between God's judgment and man's judgment. Think how rapidly human judgments are formed, on what slight and external evidence; compare them with the judgment of absolute knowledge, which does not arrive at a decision by argument, by inference, by weighing probabilities, but by simply knowing every secret of every life. Again, human judgment deals with *crime*, with definite laws broken by definite acts; it condemns what is dangerous to society, what disturbs the peace of social life. The Divine judgment deals with *sin*, with thoughts and wishes and deeds unknown by our fellows, it condemns all that is unholy, all that is impure, all that is unworthy of those who are called to be the sons of God. Again, human judgment cannot make distinctions and consider the circumstances of those whom it judges—the man who commits the crime is the criminal, and must suffer for his act. It matters not that he was ignorant, or trained in habits of vice, nor how strong a temptation was created for him by the circumstances in which he was placed. Yet surely the judgment of an all-wise Father is very different from this, and many a criminal may win pardon from his God, which he can never obtain from his fellow-men.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone  
Decidedly can try us;  
He knows each chord, its various tone;  
Each spring, its various bias.  
Then at the balance let's be mute,  
We never can adjust it;  
What's done we partly may compute,  
But know not what's resisted.<sup>3</sup>

#### i. Perfect Knowledge.

1. God knows the state of our hearts to the bottom, and this no man knows about himself. God not only knows all the good and evil we have done, but all we are capable of doing. Some of us may, before this time next year, do things which, if whispered to us now, would call forth the angry retort, 'Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?' On the other hand, there are those who will, within a year, perform acts of heroic faith and love which they would not now believe, though a man should show them unto them. We never know what is in us, or what manner of men we are,

<sup>3</sup> Burns, *Address to the Unco Guid*.

till the trial comes. The circumstances of our lot, the restraints of home and the habits of the society in which we move, produce virtues in us which are utterly destitute of root. Many a one, of the fairest fame and promise in his native place, has no suspicion how shallow his character is till he finds himself in new circumstances, with restraint removed and temptation strong, when his goodness decays like Jonah's gourd and there is a rush of vicious growths from the soil of the heart.

¶ The conduct that issues from a moral conflict has often so close a resemblance to vice that the distinction escapes all outward judgments, founded on a mere comparison of actions.<sup>1</sup>

¶ He was a light sentence judge. He could hardly imagine, he once said from the Bench, 'any circumstances in connection with the stealing of a shawl which would justify any bench of magistrates in taking seven years off a man's life.' Brutal judges are usually unimaginative men, who dole out sentences of slavery as if they were selling tape by the yard. Active as always was Lockwood's imagination, he was also a man of great self-control, and the only cases that really tried his judicial temper were those of cruelty to children.<sup>2</sup>

¶ He who shall pass judgment on the records of our life is the same that formed us in frailty.<sup>3</sup>

2. One reason which makes a true judgment of the real moral condition of a fellow-creature so difficult, is our necessary ignorance of all his circumstances. If circumstances do not decide our actions—and they certainly do not, the human will being what it is—they do, nevertheless, influence us very seriously. Natural temperament is sometimes a protection, sometimes a temptation; home is sometimes a temple of holiness, sometimes a very furnace of evil; education may be a training for heaven, it may also be a training which would make heaven odious if it were attainable. The balance of passions in one man's physical frame; the balance of natural qualities in the understanding and heart of another; the grace which has been given, or which has not been given; the friends who have been near us, at critical times in our lives, to give our career a good or, it may be, a fatal turn, by a word in season, or a sneer, or an innuendo never since then forgotten—all these things enter into the serious question, How far do circumstances excuse or exaggerate our guilt; how far do they account for or enhance what there is of good in us? Who of us would dare, with his eyes open, to attempt an answer in the case of any human

being whom we know? One Eye alone can take a full and equitable account of circumstances. He knew what had been the circumstances of the penitent thief, when He said, 'To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.' He knew what had been the circumstances of Judas, when He said, 'Good were it for that man if he had not been born.' As for us we do not know, we only guess at, the real sum of circumstances, inward and outward, of any human life; and therefore we had better 'judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come.'

¶ It is with men as with trees: if you lop off their finest branches, into which they were pouring their young life-juice, the wounds will be healed over with some rough boss, some odd excrescence; and what might have been a grand tree expanding into liberal shade is but a whimsical misshapen trunk. Many an irritating fault, many an unlovely oddity, has come of a hard sorrow, which has crushed and maimed the nature just when it was expanding into plenteous beauty; and the trivial erring life which we visit with our harsh blame, may be but as the unsteady motion of a man whose best limb is withered.<sup>4</sup>

¶ In the year 1896 an Italian general was walking along the road, and met a private, whose buff uniform and blue cloak showed many marks of wear and tear. You could guess, by the worn dress and the man's tanned face, that he had lately served in the war with the Abyssinians. But the private passed by the general without raising his hand to salute. The officer was offended. He turned round, and inquired the reason. The soldier gave a jerk with his shoulders and threw back the blue cloak. A sad sight showed itself. The man had no arms; the savage Abyssinians had cut them off. Tears filled the general's eyes. He embraced the soldier, and promised to take care of him.<sup>5</sup>

When thou shalt stand, a naked shivering soul,  
Stripped of thy shows and trappings, made most bare

Of all the fleshly glory thou didst wear—  
And hear the thunder of God's Judgment roll  
Above thy head; while to their hard-won goal  
His own elect ascend the golden stair—

What plea wilt proffer, when, too late for pray'r,  
Of thy lost life thou see'st the sum and whole?

'I have no armour dinted by the fight,  
No broken sword, no casque with cloven rim;  
Was none to witness to the grisly sight,  
For all alone we strove in darkness dim;  
Yet in the Valley of Death, O Lord, one night,  
I met Apollyon and I vanquished him.'<sup>6</sup>

3. St. Paul describes the knowledge of Christ as (1) bringing to light the hidden things of darkness, and (2) making manifest the counsels of the hearts. When our Lord comes back it will be, not only to

<sup>1</sup> George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*.

<sup>2</sup> A. Birrell, *Life of Sir Frank Lockwood*, 99.

<sup>3</sup> R. L. Stevenson, *Master of Ballantrae*.

<sup>4</sup> George Eliot, *Mr. Gilfil's Love Story*.

<sup>5</sup> F. J. Gould, *The Children's Book of Moral Lessons*, 150.

<sup>6</sup> May Byron, *The Wind on the Heath*, 65.

reckon with His servants, not only to pass the everlasting sentence on all that we have done, but to show what has been in all hearts and thoughts, and to take away the veil of darkness which covers so many things in our lives from the knowledge of all the world. We all of us have our secrets: and we must be prepared one day to give them up. 'For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.' These are the words of Christ, and they are repeated over and over again. And St. Paul is constantly reminding us of the same thing. It is not only that 'every one of us shall give account of himself to God.' It is not only that 'we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.' It is not only that God 'will render to every man according to his deeds'; it is also that God, in that day, 'shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.' 'Some men's sins,' he says, 'are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.' That is, not only is there nothing, whether good or bad, but shall come under God's judgment; but there is nothing, whether open or hidden, notorious or unknown, but, in that day, shall be published.

(1) *The hidden things of darkness.*—There is no difficulty in understanding what is meant by bringing to light the hidden things of darkness. We know what it is when something which we wish to hide is found out. We know what it is when something which we have wished to keep in the deepest darkness gets abroad, and is in every one's mouth. Now this is what the Apostle tells us is to happen with all the secrets in the day when the Lord comes to judgment. Secrets may be kept for a long time, but they cannot be kept for ever. The day must come at last when they shall be known: we cannot tell by whom; but, at any rate, by those from whom people wished to hide them. Who are to be the witnesses of that great exposure, before whom all our secrets are to be dragged into light and our souls laid bare, it is useless to guess. All we know is the awful fact—the awfulness of which we can partly imagine by what we feel now, —that we shall have to give up everything that

lies hid in our hearts and knowledge; that it will be impossible to hide anything, or keep it secret any longer; that if there is anything which we should be ashamed of being known, we shall no longer be able to help its being discovered and disclosed; that then every man will be seen as he is; the truth about everything will be made clear, the light will have poured in, brighter than the sun at noonday, on all dark places, and all dark things, and words.

¶ The Rev. R. C. Gillie in his *Little Sermons to Children* tells of a lighthouse keeper who slept at his post, and allowed the machinery that caused the light to revolve to run down. At once he started it again, and, peering into the night, could not detect the light of a single vessel in the Channel. It seemed as if his fault had passed unnoticed, so, after waiting for a day or two to see if anything came of it, he finally decided to make no mention of his lapse in the official log book. The days broadened into weeks. 'I am safe,' he cried. And indeed, as the months passed on, the incident began to fade from his memory.

Four months after this night, a captain of a P. & O. steamer, just returned from an Australian voyage, sat at a public dinner next an official of the Trinity House, which has charge of the lighthouses on the English coast. As the conversation lulled a little, the Captain looked up and said, 'By the way, when did your people make Stony Cliff a fixed light?' 'Stony Cliff a fixed light?' replied his companion, 'you are dreaming. It always has been, and is still a revolving light.' 'Well,' said the Captain, 'when I took my steamer down the Channel four months ago, I passed Stony Cliff at two in the morning: the light was fixed, and I can bring witnesses to prove it.' 'Ah—' said the official, as light dawned on him, 'will you be good enough to give me the day and hour on which you passed?' The captain saw then what was in his companion's mind, but it was too late to draw back, and the particulars were duly given.

Next morning an inspector was posting down from London to Stony Cliff Lighthouse, to dismiss the keeper on the spot.

(2) *The counsels of the hearts.*—One part of this great revealing of secrets will be the discovery of men's real character, the revelation of what each man really is. Now, this is only half known. We think that we are something or other; and other people think of us according to their views. But all the time we are what we are in the eyes of God; that which God sees us to be, that we are whatever different thing we may fancy of ourselves, or others may fancy of us. Now, we mistake about ourselves; and do not know what our neighbours have found out about us. We think ourselves one thing; they, with their sharper eyes, or more impartial judgment, see that we are another. We, perhaps, think ourselves humble; they see that we

are vain. We think, perhaps, that religion is the main thing in all we do; they see that, behind all our religion, our actions are worldly and selfish. They see that we are cowardly, and we fancy ourselves manly and brave. We never doubt that we are true: they see that we are slippery and insincere. They see that we are ill-natured and ill-tempered, while we never imagine that such a charge can be made against us. Now, to all this the day of the Lord will put an end. Then, all mistakes, all disguises, will be at an end. We shall be forced to know and see what we really are. If we are conceited, and selfish, and self-indulgent, and untrue, we shall be made to know it. We shall see ourselves as we have appeared to other eyes. And all those secret faults and sins which we have, perhaps, taken so much trouble to wrap up and hide, which we have known of ourselves, but hoped that no one else suspected,—these, too, must be shown in their true light. We must for once—we must at last—be seen as we are. We shall feel that wilful blindness to ourselves, that all shows and pretensions, are at an end. Our real character will be made clear. The truth about us will have to come out. As Almighty God knows us, so we shall, at last, know ourselves, and so we shall be known by all who then see us.

#### ii. Perfect Equity.

The man whom God sees in us is different from the man whom we see in ourselves, because we are prejudiced in our own favour, while He is quite impartial. The public may sometimes judge a man more truly than his friends, because the latter are too partial. And who can have any doubt that his friends see defects in his character to which he is himself completely blind? Our self-conceit will sometimes even make us proud of qualities for which we are the pity and laughing-stock of all who know us. Thus is our own judgment of ourselves distorted by prejudice; but God judges us impartially.

i. One reason which makes it difficult for all of us to judge the characters, as distinct from the acts, of other men equitably is this; we are seldom, if ever, without a strong bias ourselves. We have, as the phrase goes, our likes and dislikes; and only those who have a very strong sense of justice try to keep these tendencies well in hand before they speak or act in relation to others. We per-

haps flatter ourselves that we really dislike only that which is evil, or which we believe to be so. Goodness often comes to us in a very unattractive garb, with a rough manner and a coarse address; we think too much of the garb to do justice to that which it shrouds. Evil comes to us dressed up in the best possible taste, with the tone and distinction of good society everywhere apparent in its movement and expression; and we shut our eyes to its real character for the sake of its outward charm. Are we sure that we always welcome virtue, even when it is not presented to us disagreeably? Just let us reflect that, whether we know it or not, each of us has a weak side, as we call it; a tendency to some one kind of sin. If we watch ourselves, we are pretty sure to discover that this tendency exerts a subtle influence on our judgments of others. We do not heartily welcome virtues which we instinctively feel condemn ourselves. If our tendency be to vanity, we find it hard to do justice to the humble; if to sloth or sensuality, we disparage the ascetic; if to untruthfulness, we make fun of the scrupulously accurate; if to uncharitableness, we vote those who say the best they can of their neighbours dull company. We assume, without exactly knowing what we do, that the virtues which cost us little or nothing to practise are the most important virtues, and that the vices which contradict them ought to be judged with the greatest severity. We think little of, or at any rate less of, those portions of the Divine Law which we find it hard to obey, or perhaps do not obey; we are disposed to treat violations of them in others with great tenderness. Who does not see that a bias like this disqualifies us for honest, equitable judgment of character, and that it warns us not to judge character before the time, until the Lord come?

¶ 'All friends shall taste the wages of their virtue, and all foes the cup of their deservings,' says Shakespeare, feeling that it must be so, but barely making us feel that it is so, since Cordelia is dead as well as Regan and Goneril—since Lear is mad and dies, as well as Edmund, and Gloucester's heart bursts, and the poor fool is hanged; and, in short, as in *Hamlet*, the end is dismal—'quarry cries on havoc.' Judgment hardly seems to sit in state, but rather, 'proud death to have a feast toward in his eternal cell.' You are, nevertheless, made to feel, in the seeming confusion of outward award of good and ill, that you would infinitely prefer to be good and affectionate and true with Edgar, and shiver with him in his rags and misery, than leap into the proud position of an Edmund, and face the outraged conscience. And Edmund himself feels it. Before he dies, he must

worship goodness. 'Some good I mean to do.' Who would not choose to be with Cordelia in exile, rather than with Regan and Goneril at the head of the government? She is drawn somehow, it looks, into the general judgment—basely strangled in prison; but there is a judgment within a judgment. And the inner judgment which is brought to light is this, that Cordelia had preserved the jewel of her womanliness; Goneril and Regan had 'foredone themselves.' The perplexity of outward events, and the promiscuousness of the common fate on the outside, turn us sometimes away from this truth, which the Christian Church has steadily kept in view, and the discernment of which, through whatever confusion, is the mark of greatness in a man. It is this that places Job so far beyond his friends; and although he may fail sometimes in argument, we can see throughout that he has the right of the matter; and if the book does not give the clearest idea possible of a great human and religious fact,—for absolute correctness and exact measurement are not to be spoken of in this connexion,—it gives one of the profoundest readings of that fact anywhere to be met with.<sup>1</sup>

## II.

### THE TIME OF THE JUDGMENT.

Of the time and manner of the judgment which Christ pronounces on us we know very little. We are led, however, to infer that it is both present and future; and it is timeless.

1. *It is present.*—'He that judgeth me,' says St. Paul in the previous verse, 'is the Lord.' 'He that judgeth me'—not, 'will judge,' but *now*, at this very moment. That is to say, whilst people round us are passing their superficial estimates upon us, and whilst my conscience is excusing, or else accusing me—and in neither case with absolute infallibility—there is another judgment, running concurrently with them, and going on in silence. That calm eye is fixed upon me, and sifting me, and knowing me. *That* judgment is not fallible, because before Him 'the hidden things' that the darkness shelters are all manifest; and to Him the 'counsels of the heart,' that is, the motives from which the actions flow, are all transparent and legible. So His judgment, the continual estimate of me which Jesus Christ, in His supreme knowledge of me, has, at every moment of my life—*that* is uttering the final word about me and my character.

† Christ came into the world, not in order to judge it, but still for judgment; to be by the mere action of men their test. And still, though He cometh not to judge and condemn by His mouth, He is in the world 'for judgment'; by His presence we are disclosed in our true state; and by

our attitude towards Him and thought of Him, not only is our present condition manifested, but also our state and position in the universe are determined. This position is more than made known, it is altered and fixed by the movement of our minds concerning Christ, and by our judgment of Him. What think ye of Christ? This is the question of really vital importance; of vital importance, not for Him but for us.

Jesus Christ has come into the world, and is in the world a light, and the real truth is not that He is waiting for the world's favourable verdict, although this is the way in which the case presents itself to the public; but, in fact, the public and the nations, the Churches and the individuals, stand before the Lord and are being judged although not by His will or voice. A day is coming when He will declare His judgment, but now, 'If any man hear my sayings, and keep them not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.' At the end, the rejected Word, 'the same shall judge him in the last day.' Now He is silent, and we think that we judge Him; but in truth we are judging ourselves by our attitude towards Him.

The same diversity between the real and the apparent judicial situation may be seen constantly in common life. A country servant cannot imagine that Sir Frederick Roberts is a general—I am thinking of a real incident in the days of his Afghan campaign—he 'is not big enough.' The good servant is not adjudging our hero his place in the roll of great commanders but is indicating the extent of the servant's knowledge of what constitutes a general.<sup>2</sup>

‡ Is there but one day of judgment? Why, for us every day is a day of judgment—every day is a Dies Iræ, and writes its irrevocable verdict in the flame of its West. Think you that judgment waits till the doors of the grave are opened? It waits at the doors of your houses—it waits at the corners of your streets; we are in the midst of judgment—the insects that we crush are our judges—the moments we fret away are our judges—the elements that feed us, judge, as they minister—and the pleasures that deceive us, judge, as they indulge. Let us, for our lives, do the work of Men while we bear the form of them, if indeed those lives are *Not* as a vapour, and do *Not* vanish away.<sup>3</sup>

2. *It is also future.*—We take our belief in the Divine judgment from the lips of the Divine Judge Himself, and He declares that His judgment is severely individual, and shall be finally exercised in the life to come. We have to look forward to the Judgment Day, and therein to a severe inquisition into our own lives, a bringing home to ourselves of the whole meaning and consequence of moral responsibility. Difficult it may be, nay, assuredly is, for us to take the full significance of the pictorial language of the Gospel. In parting from the old literalism, let us hold fast to the truth which it contained. We have no satisfying formula for our belief, and must perforce

<sup>2</sup> P. N. Waggett, *The Age of Decision*, 85.

<sup>3</sup> Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (*Works*, xviii. 180).

<sup>1</sup> W. Horne, *Religious Life and Thought*, 94.

make shift with the only formula we have ; but as to the core of truth, which that formula aspires to utter, there can be no possible doubt. We must surely be judged, and judged by Christ. Our temporal action has eternal consequences ; we must render account to our Creator for what we have done, and for what we have become.

¶ Are you sure there is a heaven ? Sure there is a hell ? Sure that men are dropping before your faces through the pavements of these streets into eternal fire, or sure that

they are not ? Sure that at your own death you are going to be delivered from all sorrow, to be endowed with all virtue, to be gifted with all felicity, and raised into perpetual companionship with a King, compared to whom the kings of the earth are as grasshoppers, and the nations as the dust of His feet ? Are you sure of this ? or, if not sure, do any of us so much as care to make it sure ? and, if not, how can anything that we do be right—how can anything we think be wise ? what honour can there be in the arts that amuse us, or what profit in the possessions that please ?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (*Works*, xviii. 155).

## Recent Biblical and Oriental Archaeology.

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PROFESSOR R. W. ROGERS' *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament* (New York : Eaton & Mains, 1912) has been long expected, and now that it has appeared it more than fulfils our expectations. It is just the book that was wanted both by scholars and by Old Testament readers. It will take the place occupied twenty years ago by Schrader's *Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, which has never been filled since. Professor Rogers has spared no pains to bring his work up to date, and to give all the information 'the ordinary man' wants. Like all his other work, moreover, his book is distinguished not only by sound historical knowledge, but also by sound historical judgment and common sense, which are too frequently lacking in modern books on the same subject.

He has followed Schrader's example in giving the transliterated cuneiform text together with a translation of it. The two, in fact, cannot well be separated owing to the nature of the cuneiform script, the reading of which depends so largely on the meaning we assign to it. Unlike Schrader, however, he has added Assyro-Babylonian parallels to other Old Testament subjects besides history and geography, hymns and prayers as well as liturgical and doctrinal texts and mythological poems being included in his work. On the other hand, he has not traced in detail the relationship between his cuneiform extracts and the Old Testament passages which they illustrate or explain. I hope he is reserving this for a second volume ; there is no one better qualified for such a task, and it would meet with a general welcome.

The earlier part of the book is occupied with the Mythological Texts—the story of the Creation, the myth of the first man Adamu (not Adapa, as Professor Rogers continues to write the name, after the Germans), the Babylonian accounts of the Deluge, and other old legends of the same kind. Then we have selections from the multitudinous hymns and psalms and prayers of ancient Babylonia, which include the Babylonian 'Negative Confession' and fragments of the 'Wisdom Literature' ; this is followed by some Liturgical and Doctrinal texts, among them being one relating to the Scape-goat, while the latter half of the book is occupied with history, and concludes with a translation of the very important Code of Khammu-rabi. The book is so good that the best compliment I can pay to it is to indicate some of the passages in it where we do not see alike, or where I think his rendering can be improved. There was no such kingdom, for instance, as 'Patin.' The Assyrian characters should be read Khatinâ, 'the Hittites,' who were a fragment of the old Hittite empire left stranded on the Gulf of Antioch : the name of the kingdom was Unqi. The idea that the Yaudâ over whom Azariah was king in the time of Tiglath-pileser iv. belonged to northern Syria must be given up ; it rested on an erroneous reading of Scheil in the Tel el-Amarna tablets. King's view again is certainly wrong, that the reading of his Chronicle, which makes Sargon of Akkad cross 'the sea of the East,' is to be preferred to the reading of the older version of the Babylonian monarch's annals, 'the sea of the