

this collection as a mere museum of fossils, having little or no connection with anything that interests our age, there is a twofold movement towards a fresh investigation of the past, which it seems providentially designed to meet. Thus, among Christians there is a general appetite for the study of primitive antiquity, stimulated by the decadence of the Papacy, and by the agitations concerning the theology of the future which have arisen in Reformed communions; while, on the other hand, scientific thought has pushed inquiry as to the sources of the world's enlightenment, and has found them just here,—in the school of Alexandria, and in the Christian writers of the first three centuries. "It is instructive," says a forcible thinker,¹ and a disciple of Darwin and Huxley, "to note how closely Athanasius approaches the confines of modern scientific thought." And again he says: "The intellectual atmosphere of Alexandria for two centuries before and three centuries after the time of Christ was *more modern* than anything that followed, down to the days of Bacon and Descartes."

It would be unmanly in the editor to speak of the difficulties and hindrances through which he has been forced to push on his work, while engaged in other and very sacred duties. The conditions which alone could justify the publishers in the venture were quite inconsistent with such an editorial performance as might satisfy his own ideas of what should be done with such materials. Four years instead of two, he felt, should be bestowed on such a work; and he thought that two years might suffice only in case a number of collaborators could be secured for simultaneous employment. When it was found that such a plan was impracticable, and that the idea must be abandoned if not undertaken and carried forward as it has been, then the writer most reluctantly assumed his great responsibility in the fear of God, and in dependence on His loving-kindness and tender mercy. Of the result, he can only say that "he has done what he could" in the circumstances. He is rewarded by the consciousness that at least he has enabled many an American divine and scholar to avail himself of the labours of the Edinburgh translators, and to feel what is due to them, when, but for this publication, he must have remained in ignorance of what their erudition has achieved and contributed to Christian learning in the English tongue.

And how sweet and invigorating has been his task, as page after page of these treasures of antiquity has passed under his hand and eye! With unflinching appetite he has risen before daylight to his work; and far into the night he has extended it, with ever fresh interest and delight. Obligated very often to read his proofs, or prepare his notes, at least in their first draught, while journeying by land or by water, he has generally found in such employments, not additional fatigue, but a real comfort and resource, a balance to other cares, and a sweet preparation and invigoration for other labours. Oh, how much he owes, under God, to these "guides, philosophers, and friends,"—these Fathers of old time,—and to "their Father and our Father, their God and our God"! What love is due from all who love Christ, for the words they have spoken, and the deeds they have done, to assure us that the Everlasting Word is He to whom alone we can go for the words of life eternal!

A. C. C.

¹ John Fiske, *The Idea of God*, Boston, 1886, pp. 73, 86.

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THE TESTAMENTS OF THE TWELVE PATRIARCHS

[TRANSLATED BY THE REV. ROBERT SINKER, M.A., TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.]