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ART. I.—CHRISTIAN OBLIGATION WITH RESPECT TO  
THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD.

No creature of God was made for itself alone. The flower of the field, the oak of the forest, the sun in the firmament, and “the cattle upon a thousand hills,” were all formed that they might be instrumental in promoting the welfare and comfort of each other. To suppose, then, that MAN, who occupies so conspicuous a place in this great system; *man*, who is endowed with a rational as well as an active nature; who is made capable of acting upon a *plan*, and living to an *end*, was made, or is at liberty to act for himself alone; to make, each one, his own enjoyment and glory the ultimate purpose of his being;—would be to adopt a sentiment as unreasonable as it is degrading. The powers which God has given us; the relations which we bear to him; the benevolent activity of which we are obviously capable; and the rich and unremitting goodness of which we are the subjects, and of which we have ever been the subjects since we had a being;—all demonstrate that intellectual and moral action is our appropriate sphere; and that either indolence, or a course of action which does not embrace the good of

our species, and accord with the will of Him who sent us into the world, is alike unworthy of our character, and injurious to our happiness.

But when we contemplate man as bound, not merely by the obligations which result from the relations which he bears to God as Creator and Benefactor, but also by the still more tender and powerful ties of redeeming mercy and love;—his obligations rise to the highest degree of endearing force. Accordingly, the Apostle *Paul*, speaking by the Holy Ghost, declares—“None of us,” that is, “none of us *Christians* liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live we live unto the Lord, or whether we die we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.” And again; “know ye not,” says the same inspired Apostle, “that ye are not your own? for ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God’s.”

Those, therefore, who profess and call themselves Christians, make a most solemn and responsible profession. Such, indeed, as content themselves with a mere nominal relation to the Saviour, and who, provided they can maintain a fair religious character in the eyes of the world, desire nothing more, make their profession an easy thing. But to those who honestly make the Bible their test of character; who live with a reference to the all-seeing eye of God; who expect soon to stand before the judgment seat of Christ; and who remember that, “if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his;” to these, a profession of discipleship is as solemn and momentous in its import, as in the consequences which it draws in its train.

Christianity finds every descendant of *Adam* an “alien from the commonwealth of *Israel*, and a stranger from the covenants of promise.” But every one who is now a Christian has undergone a great revolution in his views, tastes, affections and enjoyments. He has been “washed, and justified, and sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God.” He has cordially repented of sin; renounced the world as a portion; turned his back on his former idols, master, and hopes; embraced the Lord Jesus Christ as “the Lord his righteousness, and the Lord his strength;” and “yielded himself to God,” on his own gracious and humbling terms, “as one alive from the dead.” And, as every real Christian, in embracing the salvation offered in the Gospel, has made

this cordial and entire dedication of himself to the Saviour; as he has practically, as well as intelligently, submitted to the Messiah as his Prophet, Priest and King—as his supreme Instructor, his atoning Mediator, and his sovereign Ruler;—so he is obviously bound to follow up this act of dedication, and to manifest its sincerity, by a life of unreserved obedience. “If ye love me,” said the blessed Master himself, “keep my commandments; for he that saith he loveth me, and keepeth not my commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit; wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them.”

If any ask, how far this dedication to the Saviour goes? The answer is, where it is genuine, it is *entire* and *unreserved*. He who has submitted to Christ, upon Bible terms, has consecrated himself, his soul and body, his time, talents, possessions, influence, all he has and is, to his new and heavenly Master. The language of his heart, in his happiest hours, is: “Other lords have had dominion over me, but now I have said unto the Lord, Thou art my God. O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant; thou hast loosed my bonds. My beloved is mine, and I am his. Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? The love of Christ constraineth me, because I thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all that they who live should, henceforth, live not unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again.” Say, professing Christian! was not this the language of thine heart in the day of thine espousals to Christ? And is it not, at least at some times, the language of thine heart now? If *not*, thou hast both the spirit and the language of the heavenly Canaan yet to learn. But if it *be*, then art thou, or art thou not, bound to be *honest* with thy God and Saviour? Art thou, or art thou not, bound to be and to do as thou hast vowed? Surely, if we are to take the spirit of our religion from the Bible; if we are to judge of it as it is delineated in the hearts and the lives of the saints whose experience is there recorded, nothing less than this is included in the surrender of the soul to Christ; and nothing less is imported in making a profession of his name before men.

But besides the obligation which every individual believer, as such, is under to that Redeemer to whom he has dedicated himself; in whose cross he glories; and to whose atoning



sacrifice and perfect righteousness he is indebted for all his precious hopes in time and eternity; he is to consider himself as bound by ties resulting from the relation which he bears to that great visible society, denominated the Church. It is to be feared that many who speak of this covenanted body of those who profess the true religion, called out of the world, and established by the authority of Christ, its Divine Head, and who even profess to make much of it, do so without duly considering either its real nature, or the obligation which membership in it infers. For what purpose, then, was the Church founded? If we look into the Scriptures we shall find it was that it might be a *light* in the midst of a dark world; that it might preserve the purity of the Gospel and its ordinances, and spread abroad the knowledge of them to the rest of mankind. The consequence is self-evident. If "holding forth the word of life;" if "sounding out" the message of mercy to every creature be the principal purpose for which the Church was originally constituted, and for which its great King and Head has sustained it, and has declared that He will sustain it, until the consummation of all things; then it inevitably follows, that every member of this Body, that is every professing Christian, is bound to exert himself to the utmost to understand the truth and order of Christ's house; to maintain them in their purity with exemplary zeal; and to impart the knowledge of them as far as possible, to all who have them not. When the Church fails to do this, she fails to fulfil one main purpose for which she was founded; and when each member of the Church fails to do all in his power to accomplish this, he fails to fulfil one of the most important duties which devolves upon him as a professor of religion. And let every member of the Church of Christ know, that when he first united himself with the body of the Lord's professing people, he became a pledged "life member" of a Body which, in its essential character, is a *Missionary Society*. He made an unreserved consecration of himself to the great cause of the world. Let him remember, too, that this is not an *extraordinary* duty, devolving only on a few Christians in distinguished stations, or on all Christians on special occasions; but an *ordinary* duty, incumbent upon all who "name the name of Christ," at all times, in all circumstances, and just as invariably and perpetually incumbent, in proportion to the opportunities of each, as any obligation connected with the Christian character.

It is really distressing to perceive that so many professors of religion of the present day, and so many whose Christian sincerity it would be thought strange to question, seem to imagine that to be orthodox in their creed, fervent in spirit, and blameless in their lives, comprehends the whole of their duty! The great duty of being unceasingly *active* for the honour of Christ, and for the temporal, and above all, for the eternal welfare of the human family, appears only by an individual here and there, out of the great mass of devout worshippers, to be seriously appreciated, or considered as at all required at their hands. And yet, there is no duty more plainly enjoined by Divine precept, or more strikingly exemplified in the lives of those who, in the inspired volume, are held up to view for our imitation.

Is the religion of Jesus Christ the greatest, the noblest, the most glorious gift that was ever bestowed by a merciful God upon our fallen world? Is it the only effectual remedy for the blindness, the corruption and the miseries of man? Does it reveal those "glad tidings of great joy" which furnish the only hope of pardon, sanctification, peace, and eternal blessedness to the children of men? Nay, is it certain that "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," but the name of Jesus Christ? Is the prevalence of this religion the richest benefit that can be conferred on civil society; the only effectual means of securing social purity, order, and happiness; the only solid basis on which civil and religious liberty can be either established or maintained; that, in a word, without which there is no hope for fallen man, either in this world, or the world to come? Are there hundreds of millions of our fellow men, not worse by nature than ourselves, and equally capable with ourselves of profiting by it, who are altogether destitute of this invaluable Treasure, and who are daily perishing for lack of it? Are they living in misery, and dying in despair or stupidity, for want of that which we possess; which it is in our power to send them; and with which we have every reason to believe that millions would be blessed forever? And can it require formal reasoning to convince the mind of one who has a particle of the spirit of Christ, that Christians are bound to send this noble, life-giving Gospel to those who are in circumstances so deplorable for want of it? If they refuse or neglect to send it, are they acting in conformity with that noble rule of duty: "Whatsoever ye would that

men should do unto you, do ye even so to them?" You would account him who should deny a morsel of bread to a starving beggar, when it was in his power to bestow it, a monster of inhumanity. Much more is he a monster in the estimate of all who "judge righteous judgment," who refuses to co-operate, to the extent of his power, in sending the bread and the water of life to those who are perishing with moral famine, and whom he might be instrumental in relieving. In the former case it is the body only that feels the pang of privation, and that only for a moment. In the latter, it is the spirit that dies, and is dying forever. "Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power;—weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched"—form the dreadful perdition from which it is our duty to furnish the means of deliverance.

But however conclusive this inferential reasoning, we have an authority on this subject still more decisive;—the solemn command of our Lord himself, delivered in circumstances and in a manner adapted to secure the most reverential regard of all who love him. When he was about to take leave of his disciples, previously to his ascent to glory, he commanded them, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." That this command is imperative on the whole Church, to the end of time, is undeniably evident. Indeed, if this were not apparent from the nature of the command itself, it would be rendered conclusively so, by the promise with which it was accompanied. "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." To the end of the world, then, or as long as there shall be any portion of the world's population to whom the pure Gospel has not been fully preached, this command remains in full force, binding the Church of God. And even after every human being on our globe shall have been fully evangelized, still the duty of continuing to preach the Gospel "to every kindred, and people, and nation and tongue," will be obligatory on the Church, and if on the Church, certainly on every individual member of it. For if it rest on the body, surely every individual is bound to see, as far as he can exert an influence, or in any wise contribute an effort, that the command be carried into faithful execution.

It was, evidently, on the spirit of this great standing command that the apostles and primitive preachers acted; not



only those to whom it was originally given, but also those who came after them in the work of evangelizing the world. "They went every where preaching the Gospel." They laboured and toiled, with diligence, and with "many cries and tears, night and day," as long as they lived, to carry the "glad tidings of great joy" to every creature. They suffered the loss of all temporal things that they might "win Christ" themselves, and impart the knowledge of his grace to others. They cheerfully encountered hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness, stripes and imprisonments, and even the martyr's death, that they might bear the message of divine mercy, to the guilty and the perishing. Why was this? why this ardent, unquenchable desire, stronger than death, "to preach among the Gentiles the unspeakable riches of Christ?" Surely they not only considered the command of their ascended Master as binding upon them, but they acted under something more than a mere sense of *duty*. The love of Christ and of souls "constrained them." They did not "count even their lives dear to them that they might finish their course with joy," and become instrumental in extending the Gospel of the grace of God. Far from their minds was the mercenary thought, that duty was to be measured by *convenience*; or that what they could accomplish *without too great a sacrifice* was alone incumbent upon them. This may accord very well with the selfish and cowardly maxims on which many modern professors of religion allow themselves to act; but is altogether unworthy of a Christian. The spirit of primitive Christianity nobly rose above it, and trampled it under their feet. O ye who have allowed yourselves to act upon such a principle, consider whither it will lead you! Suppose Christ had done no more for sinners than he *conveniently could*; where had the foundation of your hopes now been? Suppose the Apostles and other primitive preachers had done no more for spreading the knowledge of the Saviour than they *conveniently could*, what now had been the condition of our world? But, as we said, they knew no such principle, unless to abhor it. Religion was with them a supreme concern. The love of Christ, and a desire to advance his kingdom their "ruling passion;" and a willingness to "spend and be spent" for the conversion of the world, their highest honour as servants of the Lord Jesus.

I. The first question which arises, then, is, What **CAN** Christians do, and what **OUGHT** they to do, for promoting the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom?

If any reader of these pages, after going thus far, is sincerely desirous of knowing his *duty*; if he is disposed to ask, what he is *bound* to do, and in what way he *may* contribute his just share toward the conversion of the world,—the answer is ready. It is in the power of *every one*, humanly speaking, to do much in this great cause. Some have been ready, perhaps, to lament that, owing to the want of *wealth*, of *high station*, or of *great talents*, they are able to do little if any thing, for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. Let all such be assured that they labour under an entire mistake. This is a field in which all may contribute their full proportion of aid. All who *have a heart* to cast in honestly, such as they have, and as much as they ought, into this consecrated treasury, may find ample opportunity. He who has sent us into the world, with our respective talents, and who will soon come to reckon with us, makes demands of each one "according to his several ability;" not "according to what he hath not, but according to what he hath."

All Christians are not preachers. And if they were, it would not be incumbent upon all to go, personally, to carry the Gospel to those who are destitute of it. Still those who remain at home, as well as those who go forth to missionary labour, have a task to perform in the great system, which is just as necessary and important in its place as any other. The instrumentality of the latter is immediate and prominent; that of the former less obvious, but no less essential, and no less acceptable in the sight of "him who seeth in secret."

Many seem to suppose that the conversion of the world is to be effected chiefly, if not entirely, by the work of the authorized preacher. And, indeed, the value of this instrument in accomplishing the great object can scarcely be over-rated. The "ministry of reconciliation" is an ordinance of God, and, we may say, a radical ordinance in the economy of his grace. It is the all-wise appointment of heaven, "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Still let it be remembered, that great and important as this instrumentality is, it does by no means stand alone in attaining the object in question. The influence and ultimate reign of the Gospel are to be promoted by a great variety of means. Not merely by sending abroad the Bible, and the living Teacher,

but also by every thing which has a tendency to make an impression favourable to that holy system of grace and truth, which is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”

A few of the many ways in which the conversion of the world to God may be promoted, will be specified in brief detail; and,

1. A blessed influence in behalf of this cause may be exerted by **HOLY EXAMPLE**. There is a power in embodied and exemplified religion, which no profession of the lips can equal. If you wish to recommend the Gospel of Jesus Christ, for guiding the lives, and animating the hopes of others, let it be seen with clear and undoubted manifestation that the appropriate effects of that Gospel have been produced on your own hearts and lives. Let all that have an opportunity to contemplate your character “take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus.” Let them see that religion is, with you, not a heartless speculation; not a mere thing to be talked of; but that it makes you honest, amiable, benevolent, punctual to your engagements, charitable to the poor and friendless, ready to forgive injuries, “full of mercy and of good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” Let all who converse with you see, at once, that religion with you, is not a secondary matter, but the grand object of life; that it governs your own heart and conduct; and that you are in good earnest in desiring that it may pervade the world. Every thing of this kind that you manifest, is so much thrown into the scale for the spread of the Gospel. Just in proportion as you really “adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour,” you impress those around you with a persuasion of the reality and excellence of your religion; you contribute to its prevalence and power among your fellow men. “Let your light,” said the Saviour, “shine before men, that others, seeing your good works may glorify your Father in heaven.” In this way, the most indigent, illiterate, and obscure Christian may exert an influence of the most happy kind; may do more to silence gainsayers, and to edify and extend the body of Christ, than the most learned and eloquent advocate of the Gospel whose example is less consistent and ornamental. O, if even a majority of professing Christians were habitually careful to set such an example before the world, they would, no doubt, be instrumental in leading many a soul to Jesus, whom they are now so unhappy as rather to turn away from him. They

would strike the scorner dumb, and "extort a trembling homage" from the most abandoned slave of sin.

2. Every Christian may promote the conversion of the world by *humble, importunate prayer*. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." The great Hearer of prayer declares, that "He will be inquired of by his people" to do for them that which they desire and need. "Ye that make mention of the Lord," says the inspired prophet, "keep not silence, give him no rest, till he establish, till he make *Jerusalem* a praise in the earth." And again, the same prophet declares, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." And in the same spirit the Psalmist importunately prays, "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children, and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea the work of our hands establish thou it." In this way also, every one, however obscure, who has a heart to feel for the salvation of men, and a tongue to utter his desires before the mercy seat, may be a contributor, in a very important degree, to the conversion of the world. Yes, he whose heart habitually "burns within him" with a holy desire for the salvation of perishing sinners, will pray much and fervently in secret for the accomplishment of the object; and, especially, how precious to his soul will be that Monthly Concert in prayer, in which the friends of Zion unite to pray for the spread of the Gospel, and which so many who bear the Christian name habitually neglect! Ah! that professor of religion has little real concern for the success of the Gospel, and the conversion of the world, who, though found punctually in his place in the house of God, every Lord's day, is seldom seen there when the friends of Christ assemble at the commencement of every month to pray that his kingdom may come.

3. Another important means by which professing Christians may promote the conversion of the world, is by *stirring up their fellow professors* to feel, pray, and make suitable efforts for the advancement of this great object. We are too apt to forget that we are answerable for that hallowed influence which we may produce, and are bound to produce on the minds of those with whom we associate. The language of the first murderer, "Am I my brother's keeper?" has been

the language of selfish man in all ages. But it is the language of error and of sin. We *are* our brother's keepers, even in civil, and much more in religious society. The tendency of our fallen nature is, indeed, that of reckless selfishness. To counteract this narrow, degrading tendency, was one principal object for which the visible Church was founded, that the members might mutually inspect, stimulate, instruct, and assist each other; that they might correct each other's mistakes, bear each other's burdens, comfort each other in sorrow, and "exhort one another daily, lest any should be hardened or grow remiss, through the deceitfulness of sin." It is intended, in short, that the members of this body should "speak often one to another" respecting the interests of their Master's kingdom, and endeavour to stir up one another to deeds of heroic benevolence. Here, then, is a wide and most interesting field of duty, in which every Christian is called to labour, and in which he may exert himself with incalculable benefit. Does the friend of Christ, and of man find himself surrounded by brethren and sisters in the Church who appear to feel but little, and are disposed to do but little for spreading the knowledge of salvation through the world? And is he ready to sit down in despair, imagining that he can do nothing in the midst of such a dormant population? Let not such a one hold himself guiltless, if nothing be accomplished or attempted. Let him be asked such questions as these: Have you ever conversed with your fellow-professors on this great subject? Have you ever affectionately and feelingly poured into their ears the expression of your desires for the spread of the Gospel, and of your grief that more has not been done for the conversion of men to Christ? Have you ever kindly, but faithfully, appealed to their consciences and their hearts as to your and their duty in this matter? Have you let them see, from day to day, not only by your words, but also by your prayers, and your actions, that you were in good earnest in all that you said? And have you *continued* your affectionate efforts to inform their minds, and to awaken their sleeping consciences in reference to this subject, up to the present hour, without weariness—leaving the event with God? Such a course was not pursued without gaining substantial advantage to the Gospel cause; nor can any Christian estimate how much good to the souls of men he may accomplish by wisely and perseveringly adopting it: good to the brethren in Christ whom he thus addresses,



and good, perhaps, to some of the remotest heathen population on the globe.

4. Every Christian has it in his power to promote the conversion of the world, by *maintaining and imparting evangelical truth*. Many think it sufficient, and altogether the best course, to keep up a spirit of intense and active exertion, without being very much concerned about forms of doctrinal belief, either for themselves or others. This is unwisely and mischievously separating what God has joined together. Christian action, constant and unwearied, is, indeed, indispensable; but principle, in other words, doctrine, is no less indispensable to right evangelical action. While, therefore, the former is diligently maintained, the latter ought, with quite as much diligence, to be regarded. Every soul that is really converted to Christ, in every part of the world, is converted, not by error, but by the *truth*, applied to his soul by the power of the Holy Spirit. The whole world, then, is to be converted by the diffusion of the truth. Of course, every one who contributes any thing, either by writing, by speech, or by influence, toward the diffusion of truth among men; who contributes, in any way to the "holding forth of the word of life" among those who are wandering out of the way "for lack of knowledge," is promoting, in a corresponding degree, the conversion of the world to Jesus Christ.

5. Every disciple of Christ may contribute in a large measure to the great cause of the conversion of the world, by sustaining those *Associations* which have for their object the promotion of knowledge, virtue, and piety among men. The *Bible Society*; the *Tract Society*; the *Missionary Society*; the *Sabbath School-Union*; the *Infant School* system; the *Education Society*; the *Temperance Society*; the Society for promoting the observance of the *Christian Sabbath*, are all important parts of the great plan formed for bringing the whole population of the globe to the knowledge and love of "the truth as it is in Jesus." All these associations, therefore, and every other formed for similar purposes, and established and conducted upon proper principles, ought to be cordially sustained by every friend to the Redeemer's kingdom. And it may be said, in general, that the more liberally and successfully we aid them, the more we contribute to the grand object of "turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God."

The most of these Societies need but to be named to commend themselves to the consciences, and the willing patron-

age of every enlightened Christian. But there are *two* of the number which it is judged proper to select for special notice, as bearing a peculiarly close, and, indeed, vital relation to the great cause under consideration. The reference here is, *first*, to Societies, the object of which is the *education* of indigent and pious youth for the Gospel ministry. Scarcely any thing can be more wonderful than the apathy of a large portion of the Christian community to this great interest. When it is recollected how many preachers are needed at this hour, which the whole Christian world cannot at present supply, to bear the glad tidings of salvation to the benighted millions of our globe; and when it is remembered, too, that the disproportion between the demand and the supply, is every year becoming more fearful and discouraging; how shall it be accounted for, that so many intelligent Christians appear so little to appreciate the appalling fact, and manifest so little concern respecting the result? How shall the world be converted, even in hundreds of years, unless either by direct miracle; dispensing with the ordinary means; or, by preparing and sending forth into the immense harvest, a number of labourers fifty fold greater than any of our present plans contemplate, or are likely to accomplish? And that professing Christian is little to be envied, either for his discernment, or his fidelity to Christ, who does not see the most urgent need of universal and redoubled effort in this great cause; and who is not roused in its behalf to a corresponding degree of active exertion and importunate prayer. Such a one may profess, and may believe, that he is sincerely desirous of promoting the conversion of the world to Christ; but he is either very ignorant or very prejudiced, or else he is one of those of whom the Saviour speaks, whose "love is in word only, and not in deed and in truth."

The *second* class of associations to which a special reference is intended, are those which are formed for the promotion of *temperance*. This noble institution of modern times is worthy of the peculiar regard of all who are desirous of being "workers together with God" in the conversion of the world. It contemplates the removal of an evil which *forms one of the greatest of all obstacles to the spread of the Gospel*. If this be so, he who publicly pledges himself to total abstinence from ardent spirits; who joins himself to that band of Christian patriots who wish to take away this curse, not only from the present generation, but also from their chil-

dren's children, to the end of time; and who yields his entire influence to the banishment, as far as possible, of all stimulating drinks from society; is, perhaps, doing far more to "prepare the way of the Lord" in the earth, than many a preacher, who, while he *speaks* eloquently for the cause of Christ, withholds a portion of that practical influence, which is more impressive than words, and which is remembered and felt when words are forgotten.

6. Another method, and the last that will be mentioned, by which all may promote, in some degree, the conversion of the world, is by *pecuniary contributions*. And as this is a point concerning which great misapprehension is believed to exist, it seems necessary to consider it somewhat particularly.

As neither the bodies nor the minds of men can be clad and nourished without expense; so the great work of enlightening and converting the world cannot be carried on without funds; and, especially, on a scale commensurate with its transcendent importance, without very large funds. The preparation and distribution of Bibles cannot be accomplished by kind words. The feeding and clothing of missionaries; the transportation of them and their families to distant fields of labour; and there sustaining them from year to year, cannot be attained by mere good wishes. Large funds must be provided; and these funds must be contributed by *Christians*. This is, no doubt, considered as a burden by many who bear the Christian name. Alas! how far does a "deceived heart" lead such astray! It were perfectly easy for the Almighty King of Zion to bring about the conversion of the whole world, without demanding a cent from the pocket of a single Christian. But in kindness to *us*, he has so ordered the plan of his kingdom that this great result shall be accomplished by human instrumentality; that it may give employment, and interest, and holy discipline, and impart an influence altogether beneficial to those who engage in it; so that, while they labour to do good to others, they may, by the very effort, receive good in their own souls. To be allowed to contribute to such a cause, then, is so far from being a *burden*, that it ought to be considered and prized as a *precious privilege*. Here, with peculiar emphasis, are the words of our blessed Saviour applicable when he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The professing people of God under the Old Testament economy, were called upon by their religion to give a large

portion of the annual avails of their property to sacred purposes. Probably from a *fourth* to a *third* part, and, as some have thought, even more than a third of their whole income, was to be devoted to the service of the Church. And he who reads attentively the history of that dispensation, will find, that nothing was ever gained by "robbing God." The same general principle, with augmented zeal and spirituality, actuated the primitive Christians. Their liberality was pre-eminently habitual and abundant. In the days of the Apostles, we are told, they "had all things common," and "no one said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own." And although this community of goods was, manifestly, not enjoined by authority, but perfectly voluntary while it lasted; and continued, to this extent, but a little while; still it may be asserted, that, as long as the spirit of genuine Christianity remained in any good degree, in the Church, the habit of liberal contribution to the cause of Christ was a striking characteristic of his professing people. That form of Christian charity which exerts itself in providing for the relief of poverty and distress; aiding feeble Churches at a distance, as well as near at hand; and sustaining the ministers of religion in performing their labours of love, appeared among the Christians of the apostolic age, and for two or three centuries afterward in a degree truly wonderful! "They devoted themselves to it," says a pious writer, "with a labour, and perseverance, and an expensiveness which had no parallel in the world. The number of widows, children, and impotent persons supported by the liberality of the Christians at *Rome*, was almost incredibly great. They not only relieved their brethren and sisters who were near at hand; but they sent liberal relief to suffering individuals and churches at a distance. They redeemed captives; provided for the comforts of convicts in the mines; and even endeavoured, like their Master, at great sacrifices, to promote the welfare and comfort of those who exhibited nothing toward them but hatred and persecution." And we have ample evidence that this example, made a deep impression in their favour on the surrounding heathen, and was instrumental in producing many conversions to the Christian faith. Even the infidel historian, Mr. Gibbon, acknowledges that this feature in the character of primitive Christianity was very strongly marked, and that it had a very powerful operation in recommending the new religion in the eyes of the pagans.



And, as this was the spirit of primitive believers, as manifested by example; so, if we look into the New Testament, we shall find that in all this, they are to be not considered as having run into unwarranted or visionary extremes. The spirit of their Master called for no less. The language of the Holy Oracle, is "Honour the Lord with thy substance. The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered himself. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal life. To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him. He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed. He that soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully; but he that soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly. And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and behold how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury: for all they did cast in of their abundance, but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

That professing Christians, then, are solemnly bound, in all ages, not only to feed the hungry and clothe the naked around them, but also to countenance and sustain those institutions which are intended to promote the spread of the Gospel, and the conversion of the world to its power—is too plain to require proof. No one, it may be confidently said, who is willing to know his duty, can fail of seeing that this is distinctly taught, by precept as well as example, in the Word of God. There are *three* points, however, in which the greater part of pecuniary contributions, at the present day, for evangelizing the world, appear to be lamentably defective.

The *first* defect is as to SYSTEM. Those who contribute to the great objects of Christian benevolence, do not sufficiently conduct their contributions ON A PLAN. It is a law of heaven that all things be done "in order," as well as "decently." That which is done without *order* is commonly done without *proportion*, and without *wisdom*. Accordingly, he whose pecuniary contributions for the advancement of the Redeemer's



kingdom are not conducted on a *regular system*, commonly subjects both himself, and the cause which he would promote, to disadvantages of the most serious kind. He will seldom be able to *know how much* he gives, and will be apt to imagine that he gives much more than he really does. He will be often *unprepared* to give; that is, he will be unable to do it without embarrassment, having made no adjustment of his affairs to meet the event. Hence he will be often reluctant to give, where he ought to be willing; both because he has, by improvidence, made it inconvenient, and because his contributions, strewed before his imagination without order, appear far more numerous than they really have been. Whereas, he who sets apart a stated portion of his income to benevolent and sacred uses, and, of this portion, devotes a particular part to each worthy object which may in succession claim his regard, will be always *ready* to give, because he will adjust his expenses and other affairs to his system of contribution. He will give with *cheerfulness*, because he will take, from time to time, from a fund which he has devoted to the Lord, and, of course, considers as no longer his own. What he might be at first reluctant to give, calculation and habit will render, in the end, pleasant and even delightful. He will systematically deny himself, and save, upon a plan, that he may have the more to give. And he will, by and by, perhaps, take from his little consecrated treasury, with as much impartiality and disinterestedness as he would from a purse placed at his disposal for charitable purposes by another. Hence the wisdom and benignity of that apostolical direction before quoted—"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." Upon every Lord's day, when the believer's heart might be expected to be peculiarly softened and humbled by a sense of his sins, and his faith and hope strengthened by meditation on the Saviour's love and glory;—he was to consecrate a portion of his substance to the Lord, and to do this conscientiously, "as God hath prospered him."

If this principle were duly regarded, we should not so often witness the humiliating spectacle of professing Christians being excited to a mere temporary paroxysm of charitable feeling, by an eloquent discourse, or an affecting private appeal; which, however, passed away almost as speedily as it was produced. This ought not to be so. The discharge of the duty in question ought to be just as constant, regular, and habitual

as the discharge of any other obligation of the Christian life. Neither should we so often witness the languor, decline, and extinction of societies, formed for prompting and collecting charitable contributions. When will the disciples of Christ learn the duty and importance of seeking the kingdom of God, not only *first*, but with as much *system*, *perseverance* and *energy*, as they daily manifest in their secular pursuits?

The *second* point with regard to which there seems to be a lamentable deficiency in Christian contributions for the conversion of the world, is that of *spontaneity*—giving with *cordial cheerfulness*. A gift to God is of no value, if it be given grudgingly. “The Lord loveth a cheerful giver.” If professing Christians really believed the Master’s word, when he said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive;” if their contributions were truly prompted, as they ought ever to be, by faith and love, and a deep sense of obligation; if they habitually considered such contributions as required at their hands, just as much as any Christian duty whatever; if they regarded it as a precious privilege regularly to set aside, every week, a portion of what God had given them, as devoted to his service; and if, in the true spirit of this consecration, they never thought of waiting for an *Agent* to come and *solicit* their bounty with as much importunity as if he were begging for alms for himself;—how much trouble would be avoided! How much needless expenditure on agencies might be spared! How much Christian principle exemplified! In truth, when professors of religion come to feel on this subject as they *ought* to feel, and as they certainly *will* feel, before the arrival of the “latter day glory;” there will be no need of that *importunate begging* of the disciples of Christ, to do their duty, which may be said to form a striking feature and disgrace of the present day. The people will, unsolicited, bring forward their offerings with a willing mind; and the world will once more see what occurred when the Lord’s tabernacle was erected in the camp of his covenanted people in days of old; when, though the offerings were voluntary, they were so general and so abundant, that it became necessary to make proclamation through the camp that the people should *stay* their hands, because no more was needed. Formerly it was not always easy to dispose of a gift to the cause of God, according to the mind of the donor. But now there is no difficulty in the way of him who has a heart to give. In every part of our land channels are now wide open, through which the wealthy Christian may readily transmit his hundreds, or his

thousands to the treasury of the Lord:—through which the poorer disciple may, without trouble, annually convey his dollar with an humble and thankful heart:—and by which even the poorest widow, who has but a few cents to give, may, with perfect convenience, send her humble offering to the destination which she desires, without leaving her own dwelling.

A *third*, and the last point to be mentioned, in which there is a grievous deficiency in the contributions of almost all Christians, is the want of *adequate liberality*. It is not denied that many at the present day give with greater liberality than their fathers; and that there has been a decisive, and steadily progressive improvement in this respect, within the last fifteen or twenty years. But what is denied is, that the ratio of giving has yet reached, or even approached, its proper point. Scarcely one professing Christian in a thousand gives as much as he *ought*, or any thing like it. No general or absolute rule, indeed, as to this point, can be laid down. A few make conscience of giving a *tenth* part of their income to charitable purposes. Perhaps all who are not strictly paupers, ought to do this; and even some paupers have exercised a decision of Christian character which enabled them habitually to reach the object. But many ought to do much more. The Bible speaks, very pointedly, of the duty of *denying ourselves* for the sake of Christ and his cause; of making *sacrifices* of personal comfort when necessary for promoting the extension of his kingdom; of giving up some of those indulgences for which our selfish nature pleads, that we may have the more to contribute to the cause of Christian benevolence. Thus the Apostle *Paul* habitually acted. Thus the primitive believers generally considered it as their privilege and their duty to act. But which of *us* has ever really exemplified the spirit of this requisition? Which of us has ever denied himself any personal comfort for the sake of being able to give the more for promoting the spread of the Gospel? Which of us has ever really denied himself a *meal*, or a *new garment*, when needed—or any personal or domestic article of *convenience*, that he might be able to make a larger donation for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom? It may be asserted without fear of contradiction, that scarcely one Christian in a thousand, in modern times, ever thinks of doing this. The real principle on which the great mass of professors of religion appear to act is, that if they have at command a small sum, which they can bestow without incurring the *least inconveni-*

*ence*, either to themselves or their families; without interfering with any of their secular plans, either of profit or pleasure; they will bestow it, and imagine that nothing more can be reasonably demanded or desired. Was this the spirit of the Apostles and primitive believers? Nay, is this acting upon a principle which any intelligent Christian, with the Bible in his hand, and when bowing before the throne of mercy, can reconcile with his conscience to the Redeemer? Think, O believer, of what the Saviour has done and suffered for you? Remember that "though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich;" and then say, whether the plan of contributing nothing to his cause but that which we can spare with entire convenience, will stand the test of sober judgment now; and above all, of that tribunal before which all our vain pleas must pass in solemn review?

See a professing Christian living in splendour! Dwelling not only in a "ceiled house," but, it may be, in a little palace; riding habitually in his coach; having his mansion furnished with the richest elegance; his cellar filled with costly wines; the precincts of his dwelling tastefully and expensively adorned; and his whole establishment formed upon a plan of luxurious, if not wasteful liberality. And for every new purpose of bodily adorning, and sensual indulgence, he has always enough. And yet, perhaps, this very professing Christian, in adjusting his contributions to the great cause of benevolence, in calculating *his* portion of the expense for spreading the glorious Gospel, thinks himself sufficiently liberal if he throw into the Lord's treasury one *twentieth*, or, perhaps, one *fiftieth* part as much as he freely expends on "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." Nay, perhaps, while he is laying up many thousands every year, for he knows not whom, he has only a few paltry dollars to give, and even these with reluctance, to that *great cause*, in which the glory of the incarnate Redeemer (to whom he professes to own every thing) and the salvation of a lost world, are equally concerned! Now, I ask, does this man claim to be a *Christian*;—a redeemed man; to be "not his own, but bought with a price;"—to be the Lord's "steward;" to love Christ and his kingdom *supremely*; and to be disposing of his property as one who expects speedily "to give an account of his stewardship!" Is this man "denying himself, and taking up the cross, and following Christ?" Is this man setting



his affections on things above, not on things on the earth?" Is this man "crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts?" Is he striving to "keep under the body," and making it his supreme object to be a "worker together with God," in restoring lost man to holiness and heaven? In a word, can such a man say, that he "lives not to himself," but to Christ; and that he "remembers Zion above his chief joy?" It cannot be! Alas! the deceitfulness of sin must, indeed, exert a most blinding and perverting influence, when it can persuade him to cherish the Christian's hope, who has the broad stamp of supreme worldliness so deeply impressed upon every line of his course!

Say not, that if Christians were to act on the principle here attempted to be established, they would deprive themselves of comfort. Far from it! They would be in the way of enjoying the highest comfort. But this plea will be more particularly examined hereafter. In the meantime let it be considered, how much might be saved for the cause of Christ, by *retrenching* in what are, strictly speaking, *superfluities*; that is, expenditures which, though they may minister to parade and ostentation, might all be spared without infringing on real, rational enjoyment. How many, in *building houses*, might dispense with some useless, but showy decoration, which is merely calculated for ornament, not to add any thing to the comfort of the inhabitants! How many might do the same in *furnishing* their houses, in *adorning their bodies*, in adjusting their *equipage*, and in arranging their whole system of *domestic expenditure*! Nay, how many, by a long list of such savings, each of them small, but in the aggregate amounting to much; for example, by banishing from their tables and their houses, many a useless, and perhaps mischievous luxury; might do *themselves* good rather than harm; might promote the health and real happiness of their *children*, by withdrawing from them those luxurious indulgences, which universally tend to render young people effeminate, sensual, and ultimately miserable; and, while conferring these benefits, at the same time save enough, in a few years, to support one or two foreign missionaries in the field of evangelical labour; and thus, perhaps, savingly benefit hundreds of immortal beings for time and eternity! If any are disposed to smile at such a representation, as rather savouring of fanatical rigour, than of sober Christian principle, they only manifest that they have derived their ideas of



Christianity rather from the maxims and habits of worldly professors, than from the Word of God, and the example of primitive believers.

If the foregoing views are correct, it is evident, not only that every human being is *bound* to contribute toward the conversion of the world; and that every one who has a heart for the purpose, *may* contribute daily and hourly toward this great object; but that the mass of professing Christians are lamentably deficient both in the *manner* and the *degree* in which they discharge this duty; that we all most deplorably come short of what is demanded from us by our Master, and by the great interests of the heathen, and the Church of God. It is evident, that if we would acquit ourselves as faithful servants, we must assume a standard of *zeal* for the spread of the Gospel far more elevated; of *prayer*, far more intense; of *effort*, far more laborious and unwearied; of *contributions*, far more systematic, cheerful, and liberal; of *sacrifices*, far more real, deep, and constant, than we have ever yet attained, or seemed to consider as incumbent upon us. In short, the aim, in all that has been said, is to inculcate upon every professing Christian as an indubitable and solemn duty, "not merely that partial and inefficient zeal which draws forth a paltry, and perhaps, reluctant annual contribution to a Missionary Society; but such a zeal as lays the whole man, with all he has and is, as a consecrated offering on the altar of God;" a zeal which shall impel the Church, and every individual member of it, to consider the spread of the Gospel, and the salvation of men, as the grand object to which their talents, their desires, their prayers, their labours, and their substance should be supremely directed, to the end of their earthly course.

Having seen what all professing Christians are *bound* to do, and *can* do, for promoting the conversion of the world, let us next,

II. Attend to some of those considerations which show *the wisdom and unspeakable advantages of such a course*.

And here it may be remarked, there is little hope that what is about to be offered will make an impression upon any other mind than that of the real Christian. To the man of the world, or the mere formal professor, whose aims, enjoyments, and hopes are terminated by the present life; by whom the Gospel has never been cordially embraced; and to whom its heavenly proclamation, as wonderful as it is glorious, brings no pleasure; all that is about to be said will appear, proba-

bly, as idle words. But to him who has an enlightened and sanctified conscience, and who has heartily adopted, as a practical principle, the scriptural declaration, that "he is not his own," the following thoughts, it is hoped, will come with some degree of weight. And,

1. Such a course of active desire, sacrifice, and effort as we have described, is manifestly *required of all by our Master in heaven.*

Let me beseech every one who desires earnestly to know his Master's will, to review the representations which have been made, and ask, whether there is one of the whole number which is not fully borne out both by reason and Scripture? Let none say that this is carrying matters to extremes; that it is being "righteous over much." Think again, professed disciples of Christ! think of the *nature of that cause* which is commended to your earnest, your supreme attention. Can it be, that the great, the chief work of God himself, for which "the worlds were made;" for which the Son of God left the throne of glory; to the promotion and accomplishment of which all the predictions of the prophets, all the stupendous miracles exhibited to the ancient Church, and all the revolutions of empires were made subservient by Him who does nothing in vain; can it be that such a cause is a *small matter*, which professing Christians are at liberty to neglect? Consider, further, the relation we bear to the Saviour; how much we owe Him; the great purpose for which we were sent into the world; and the nature of that dedication which we have voluntarily and deliberately made of ourselves to the service of "Him who loved us, and gave himself for us, the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God." Consider, moreover, who is the best judge of our duty—*we*, or *He* who made us, who gave us all the faculties, possessions, privileges, and advantages which we enjoy, and who "sees the end from the beginning?" And, finally, as we are commanded to pray without ceasing, "Thy kingdom come;" and as the essential spirit of true religion is every where represented in Scripture as disposing those who possess it to adopt and urge this prayer; is it, can it be any thing less than solemn mockery thus to pray, while we are not willing to do all in our power to promote the cause for which, in words, we supplicate? Consider these things, and then say, whether the amount of our obligation to the "Lord that bought us" has been overrated; and whether *less* could reasonably be re-

quired of us than that which has been represented? and having pondered these considerations, then turn once more to those passages of the Word of God which have been quoted in the preceding pages, and add to their number such as these —“Seek *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.” “Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.” “He gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.”

2. Such a course is indispensable *as a suitable evidence of Christian character.*

A distinguished Unitarian of our own country, is reported not long since, to have said: “If I really believed as the Orthodox profess to believe, concerning the state of human nature, and the indispensable necessity of salvation by the justifying righteousness and sanctifying Spirit of Christ, I should give myself no rest, spare no expense or sacrifice within my reach to secure the salvation of men.” There cannot be a more correct sentiment. Christendom does not afford a more inconsistent or humiliating spectacle than the language of thousands, who profess, in words, to believe that “there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved,” taken in connexion with their habitual defect in feeling, in prayer, and in effort for the salvation of a benighted and perishing world!

Whatever others may do, then, the professing Christian cannot neglect the honest and cordial performance of this duty, in some good degree, without violating his vows of allegiance to Christ; “denying the Lord that bought us;” and most seriously drawing into question the sincerity of his Christian character. In fact, however confidently some may estimate the evidences of their “good estate” toward God, no evidence can stand the test of Scripture but that which exhibits the spirit which we are now recommending. Ye who claim the hopes and consolations of Christians! know that the Church has been too long encumbered with professors of religion, who, with an orthodox creed, and a blameless life, have never extended either their affections or their cares, beyond the narrow circle of their estate and household; who, with pious

language on their lips, have never mourned in sincerity over the corruption and the miseries of their fellow-men; never felt for the wretchedness of the poor heathen; were never willing to give more than a mere stinted pittance for the rescue of a lost world from perdition. Yes, the Church has been too long encumbered with such professors as these. May God give them repentance, and save his professing family from any addition to their number! They may be as forward, as sanguine, and as loud in their profession as they please; but they *must* be considered as insincere. Nay, if they were to spend their lives on their knees, supplicating for the spread of the Gospel, they must still be pronounced hypocrites, who “say, and do not;” who perpetually cry, “Lord, Lord,” but keep not his commandments. There is such a thing as the *cant* of piety without the substance. Here it is, in all its criminal and revolting deformity!

Whenever, then, the things of this world occupy a higher place in the heart of any professor of religion than “the things which are Jesus Christ’s:”—whenever, in the midst of orthodox and pious *talk*, it is evident that the desire of accumulating large possessions, of inhabiting a splendid mansion, of living magnificently, and of holding a conspicuous station among men, so absorb and govern his mind, that he can spare but little of time, of heart, or of money, for sending the glad tidings of salvation to perishing millions of immortal beings;—he may call himself a Christian; he may have the title freely accorded to him by a flattering world, who know as little of the matter as himself; but he has no real love for the souls of men; and, of course, no real love for Him who came down from heaven, and gave himself up to death, “for the life of the world.”

3. The more habitually and zealously Christians pursue the course which has been recommended, *the more they promote their own sanctification.*

It is the law of our moral, as well as our intellectual and physical nature, that the exercise of any faculty or principle increases its strength. Faith becomes stronger, the more it is employed on its appropriate objects. Love grows more ardent the more constantly and purely it is cherished. Benevolence, in its whole extent, gains new intensity, and new elevation by habitual exercise. Nay, even when the exercise in question is attended with privation and pain, still it



reflects a benefit, and oftentimes one of a very rich and lasting kind. We tell the husbandman that his being consigned to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, is a real blessing in disguise. We tell him that daily labour promotes his bodily health, strengthens his animal system, gives salutary occupation to his mind, and preserves him from the multiplied evils to which indolence and inaction give rise. By all the toils and cares which the successful cultivation of the ground demand, he is a great gainer, not only by the direct products of his labour, but also by its immediate personal influence. So it is with regard to moral and spiritual efforts. Every effort we make for the benefit of others, re-acts, most benignly, upon ourselves. The more deep our sympathy for perishing men; the more cordial and tender our concern for their everlasting welfare; the more fervent our prayers for their salvation; the more unwearied our efforts to promote their temporal and eternal happiness; and the more liberal our contributions, from right motives, on their behalf—the more our own souls will be softened, warmed, lifted up, purified, and made to resemble Christ: the more our own faith, and love, and zeal, and benevolence will be increased. Now, what is this increase, but sanctification?—What is it but growing in grace? So true are the words of our Lord, in every sense in which they can be applied—“Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and running over shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.”

Hence, it is an animating consideration, that the more faithfully and extensively we send the Gospel abroad, even to the remotest ends of the earth, the more certainly will the Gospel prevail among ourselves. We can devise no plan more happily and powerfully adapted to promote the cause of God in our land, than greatly augmenting our desires, prayers, labours, and expenditures for the salvation of the heathen. This engagement in missionary work, as one of the means of grace, adapted to produce rich fruits to those who *do* the work, as well as to those who *receive* it, has never been appreciated by Christians as it ought to have been. And who can tell but that the arid and languishing condition of many of our churches at home, is to be ascribed to their neglect of this duty? Were the writer of these pages called upon to give counsel to a small and feeble church,



struggling with a low state of religion, and which many would think might be excused for neglecting all care about the heathen;—and were he requested to point out those means which might be best adapted to promote its enlargement and spiritual prosperity;—among the leading counsels, he would say to such a church,—“If you wish to rise, and grow, and prosper, engage in good earnest in sending the Gospel to the destitute and the heathen. Go to work immediately. Exert yourselves by prayer, by mutual conversation, and all other Scriptural means, as well as by pecuniary contributions. Endeavour to engage, not only every member of the Church, but also every hearer, from childhood to hoary age, in this hallowed work. Try the experiment fully and faithfully; and amidst your poverty, it will enrich you. Amidst your feebleness, it will strengthen you. Amidst the smallness of your numbers, it will enlarge your borders. Amidst your languor and coldness, it will be the means of rousing you to feeling, and zeal, and vigour, and sacred enterprise in the service of your Master. And when you hear from the foreign field the blessed intelligence, that your prayers and labours have been the means of saving good to the heathen;—that hundreds, perhaps thousands of the benighted Pagans have been graciously enlightened by your instrumentality;—how will it serve to awaken every Christian feeling; to impart a sacred thrill of gratitude and joy to every bosom not totally dead to moral influence; and to shed down upon you, by a hallowed re-action, those very blessings which you benevolently devised for others!”—“There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.”

4. The course here recommended to the Christian, is the direct way to the enjoyment of the *richest and purest happiness that man can taste on this side of heaven*. Nay, it is the same species of enjoyment that reigns in the heavenly world. The man who is most exclusively selfish, is the most miserable, as well as the most criminal of men. The ways of true wisdom are, in all cases, the ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. But of all the ways of wisdom, those in which we travel in *doing good to others*, may be said to be the most pre-eminently pleasant. In this kind of activity we most nearly resemble the infinite Source of all holiness and enjoyment. How exquisite the pleasure which is attendant on a course of benevolent exertion, and on witnessing its precious fruits in the production of human happiness, tem-

poral and eternal, many Christians have already known; and a much greater number will, in future know. Here is a present reward more rich, and more truly glorious than a conqueror's crown. "What is there in all the accumulation of wealth, in all the pageantry of state, in all the gratifications of sense, in all the delirious joys of giddy dissipation, once to be compared with this? Oh, pleasures cheaply purchased, placidly enjoyed, ever rising, ever new, never languid, never remorseful, why are ye pursued so seldom, and attained by so few? Alas! those who seek their highest enjoyment in any other way, as miserably cheat themselves, as they impiously "rob God," and meanly defraud their fellow men!

5. The expenditure of property in promoting the subjection of the world to Christ, is not only the most noble, but also *infinitely the most profitable object to which it can be devoted.* *The most profitable to ourselves.*

Every wise man will endeavour to turn that which is committed to his charge to the best account. He will endeavour to vest his capital in that species of stock, and to order its management on such principles, as will certainly produce the *best interest.* Now, what is the grand object which every one has in view in acquiring and laying up temporal possessions? Undoubtedly *happiness*; the happiness of himself, or his children; or both united. The question, then, is, what method of disposing of our property;—of a part or the whole of it, as the case may be;—will be likely to produce the greatest amount of enjoyment to the possessor, and to those for whom he is most anxious to provide? As to the possessor himself, there can be no doubt that the most productive method will be to *do good with it*;—to promote happiness, and, of course, the highest and noblest kind of happiness. This will be to gratify the best feelings of our nature, and produce the greatest amount of that which we profess to seek. The same principle will, most manifestly, apply with regard to our *children.* In laying up property for them, what is it we profess to desire? All will reply,—"Their happiness certainly." Be it so. Which course will be most likely to promote the real enjoyment, the true elevation of your children, in this world, as well as in the world to come;—to lay up for them, by great labour, and rigid saving, half a million of property, that they may be enabled to live in splendour, without effort on their part, and thus furnishing them with

the means of nourishing pride, pampering appetite, and preparing them to be selfish, effeminate, haughty, and of course, unhappy, voluptuaries; or, by devoting a large part of your superfluous wealth to the great purposes of Christian benevolence; training them up with moderate pecuniary expectations; making them feel the importance of an early exertion of their own faculties; habituating them, from the earliest dawn of reason, to think of the wants and miseries of their fellow creatures, to sympathize with them, and to deny themselves for the sake of promoting the welfare of others: in a word, nurturing them, not in the lap of luxury, but in the school of Christian principle, in constant familiarity with the scenes and efforts of Christian charity; and taught by the example of those whom they most revere, to think wealth chiefly desirable as a means of doing good; in other words, promoting the glory of God, and the happiness of man:—in which of these schools would you wish your children to be trained up? In which of these courses would they be most likely to find rational and permanent enjoyment? Which, think you, will be most likely to give you pleasure when you come to die—that you are about to leave them large estates, to enable them to wallow in wealth and sensuality, and, perhaps, to ruin their souls; or, that with a very moderate share of this world's goods—by no means large enough to supersede the necessity of their own vigorous efforts—you will bequeath to them a large legacy of *prayers*, of *holy example*, of the *benediction* and *love* of all good men for their father's sake, and of that *intellectual and moral training*, which those who are nurtured in the atmosphere of Christian purity and benevolence, are alone likely to realize? Nay, which of these would every man, wise for this world, to say nothing of Christian wisdom, prefer to leave his children? It is not possible to hesitate a moment. A very wealthy and respectable professor of religion, when he was about to die, said to his surrounding family—"My children, I have laboured hard, and procured you all that the world calls good fortunes; but I fear I have lost my own soul, and gained for you that which will endanger yours." Oh, when will those whom God has largely favoured with this world's goods learn that the real value of property is to do good with it, and to adopt, and act upon the principle, that fifty or a hundred thousand dollars are unspeakably better laid out, both for themselves and their children, and that even for this

world, when devoted to the great purpose of promoting the temporal and eternal welfare of their fellow men, than when hoarded up for the most splendid plan of personal expenditure? Yes, rely upon it, Christians, a hundred thousand dollars are put out at incomparably better interest when vested in the stock of Christian benevolence than in any other investment that worldly wisdom can devise. Nay, it may be asserted without fear of contradiction, amidst all the boasted success of the children of this world in laying up wealth, that all we expend on selfish, worldly, and sensual objects is gone, gone forever—worse than gone; and that it is only what we *lay out for God*, that we can be said, in any sense, to *lay up for ourselves*.

6. Let the *sin, the misery, and the gloomy prospects of the heathen*, melt and move your hearts. Without staying to discuss the question, whether it is *possible* for any of the heathen to be saved without having the Gospel preached unto them, no one can doubt that their moral corruption, their blindness, and their temporal degradation are deplorably great. Behold the hundreds of millions who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, strangers to happiness and hope, and concerning whom no one who looks upon them can doubt that their hearts are unsanctified, and that they are altogether unfit for heaven? Shall they be left to travel on in all this darkness and desolation? Shall they be left, generation after generation, to perish in their sins, while we enjoy the Gospel, and are able to send it to them? What say you, professing Christian? Has the God of all grace favoured you with gospel privileges? Has he “loosed your bonds?” Has he “translated you from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son?” And have you no pity for those who know nothing of the grace and hope of the Gospel? Who have never heard that “the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin?” We eulogize the benevolence of that man who risks his own life to save the life of his fellow creature. We celebrate the generosity of him who divides his *last loaf*, or parts with a *garment* really needed for his own person—to relieve a sick and starving beggar. But O, how much more worthy of commendation is that benevolence which feels for the welfare of the never-dying soul; and is willing to make almost any sacrifice for the sake of promoting its eternal blessedness!

7. Remember that if you aim at the conversion of the

world, and labour to promote it, you aim and labour, in the same proportion, *for spreading happiness through the world.* Neither the enemies nor the friends of the cause of Missions appreciate as they ought the mighty influence resulting from the success of this cause. So far as it makes progress among men, it is throughout identified with the progress of all the best interests of our race, for this world as well the world to come. It is the best pledge of the advancement of human elevation and human glory. It is essentially connected with the education of youth; the diffusion of literature, science and the arts; the establishment of civil and religious liberty; and the promotion of justice, purity, order and peace throughout the world. In short, it is that blessed cause in the progress of which every friend of man ought to rejoice, and to be desirous of co-operating to the extent of his capacity. It is that cause which, so far as it prevails, eradicates evil, removes, to the extent of its reign, the worst sources of human suffering; promotes useful knowledge; asserts and establishes the rights of men; is the best pledge of internal improvement of every valuable kind; and is alone capable of transforming a wilderness into a fertile and beautiful garden, and elevating man to the real glory of his rational and moral nature. Those who contribute any thing, then, to the promulgation of the Gospel throughout the world, contribute just so much to the melioration of the human race; not merely in respect to the interests of piety; but also in regard to every other interest, which either the wise statesman, the genuine patriot, or the enlightened scholar could wish to promote.

8. Consider, once more, now much *the honour of our Master in heaven* is involved in our compliance with the duty here recommended. The spread of the Gospel is the spread of that "Name which is above every name," and of that glory which not only *we* profess to make out chief end, but which is the chief end of all holy beings in the universe, and ought to be the supreme end of all created existence. It is extending the honour, and making known the unparalleled love of Him "in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Disciple of Christ! can you resist this last appeal? Do you owe all you have and hope for to this Saviour? Do you expect in a little while to join that blessed Assembly whose enraptured song, through eternity, will be—"Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, unto



Him be glory for ever and ever?" And will you not now take some interest, and make some efforts, for extending that glory? Nay, will you not now *devote* yourself, in some good degree, to adding as far as possible to that "multitude which no man can number, gathered out of every kindred and people, and nation and tongue," who shall spend an unwasting eternity in enjoying the love and the glory of Him who was slain, and who redeemed them to God by his blood!"

And now, Christian brethren, standing upon this interesting and hallowed ground, let me entreat you calmly and prayerfully to review what has been said, and to ponder it well. Ye who profess to have "tasted that the Lord is gracious," and to know by experience something of the value of the Gospel;—is what you have read according to the will of Christ, or is it not? If it *be*, can you venture, in full view of eternity, and of the judgment seat, to turn away and so say—"We pray thee have us excused?" Well, be it so! But remember! that if you are excused from loving the Saviour supremely, and seeking his glory, and the advancement of his kingdom "above your chief joy"—you will also, of course, be excused from sharing with him in the kingdom of his everlasting blessedness! This is not the mere judgment of a fallible mortal. The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it! And every one who loves the world more than the Saviour will find it awfully accomplished! O that I could cause you now to see the reality and importance of these things as I know you will one day view them! Yes, my friends, when you and the heathen shall meet before the bar of God, and when in the light of eternity, you shall see the insignificance of all earthly grandeur and glory, compared with the unfading treasures which the Gospel proclaims;—then, if not before, you will see that the half had never been told you of the importance of this subject.

The great scope of what has been said, is to convince professing Christians, not only that they ought to *continue*, systematically and perseveringly, to do all that they have ever yet done, for this most important of all causes; but that they are called *to do much more* than they have ever yet done. We ought to *calculate on a great increase of missionary effort, with as little delay as possible*. Those who take narrow views of this subject may, perhaps, think it enough to sustain, and a little to invigorate the missions already estab-

lished. But let not such an unworthy thought be entertained. The poor benighted heathen are passing into the eternal world by many thousands every day. While we deliberate and delay, they are rapidly falling beyond our reach. On the present plan of missionary labour, *two centuries*, nay, *ten centuries* would not suffice to evangelize the whole population of the globe: and, in the mean time, many thousands of millions would have sunk to irrecoverable ruin. The work must be made, under the divine blessing, to proceed upon a greatly augmented scale, or, at the end of fifty generations, it will be still but half done.

Let none say, that God will, in his own time, convert the world; and that all we have to do is to “pray without ceasing,” and wait for the accomplishment of his promise. It is an utterly false and mischievous sentiment! It is the miserable refuge of indolence and parsimony. The Gospel has always been propagated by human exertion; and never, we may say with confidence, never has it been propagated signally and extensively, but by the instrumentality of efforts marked in a corresponding degree with zeal and heroic labour.

*Ministers of the Gospel!* This subject addresses itself most solemnly to *you*. You are appointed to be the leaders and guides of the people. To you it belongs to possess in the highest degree, and to exhibit with the purest lustre, and the most active efficiency, the high and holy spirit of Christian benevolence of which we have spoken. It is your's to enlighten those who are uninformed on this great subject; to exhort the indifferent; to stimulate the tardy; to shame the parsimonious; and to go before all in the faith, the love, the public spirit, the courage, and the heroic enterprise which are indispensable in this immense and most noble field of Christian effort. Great is your responsibility. Great will be your guilt, if found unfaithful; and, if otherwise, “great will be your reward in heaven.”

Professing Christians! once more I say, consider what has been said. Your lot has been cast in a solemn and eventful period; a period in which all we have and are, are put in requisition for Christ. Will you dare to *protest any of his drafts* on your hearts, your time, or your substance? The time is short. The fashion of this world is passing away. But the record of what we do, or what we do not, will be eternal. This world is Christ's. It is infallibly to be subdued to the love and power of Christ. And the work is to be accomplished, not by miracle, but by human instrumentality. This work

is now proceeding; and no man can be an idle spectator of its progress without sin. The requirements of the Saviour are too plain to be mistaken, and too solemn to be trifled with. His eye is upon us; and his judgment is at the door. God grant that you may be found faithful unto death; and that when that great crisis shall arrive, you may be able to look back with holy satisfaction, with heavenly joy, on much done for Christ and your generation; not as the ground of your confidence; not as your title to eternal life: No, the righteousness of Him who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, being the only foundation of a sinner's hope; but as means by which a Divine Saviour has enabled us to glorify the riches of his grace; as the fruits of his blessed Spirit; as evidences of vital union to his body; and as pledges of admission to the joys and glories of his presence!

MINIMUS.

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ART. II.—REMARKS ON THE USES OF CHASTISEMENT.

THE intermingling of a few advices, particularly directed to the case of ordinary Christians under affliction, with our usual treatises and reviews, cannot, we are persuaded, be unwelcome. We therefore take our pen for the purpose of direct address to sufferers, of whatever kind.

It is only in the Word of God that we learn to consider affliction as a blessing. The utmost which the most refined philosophy can effect is to remove from our sorrows that which is imaginary, to divert the attention from the cause of distress, or to produce a sullen and stoical resignation, more like despair than hope. The religion of the Gospel grapples with the evil itself, overcomes it, and transforms it into a blessing. It is by no means included in the promises made to true Christians that they shall be exempt from suffering. On the contrary, chastisement forms a necessary part of that paternal discipline, by which our heavenly Father fits his children for their eternal rest in glory. The Psalmist asserts the blessedness of the man who is chastened by the Lord, with this qualification as necessary to constitute it a blessing,

that he is also instructed in divine truth. *Psalms* xciv. 12. By this we understand that the influence of chastisement is not physical; that mere suffering has no inherent efficacy; but that the afflictions of this life are, in the hand of God, instrumental in impressing divine truth upon the heart, awakening the attention of the believer to the consideration of his own character and situation, the promises of the Gospel, and the rewards of heaven. The child of God is assured that all things work together for his good; in this is plainly included the pledge, that chastisements and afflictions shall eventually prove a blessing; and this is verified by the experience of the whole Church.

The subject can scarcely ever be inappropriate. We are all familiar with suffering, in our own persons or the persons of those whom we love: we are either now enduring, or shall at some future time endure severe afflictions. Among our readers, it is natural to suppose that some are at this very moment labouring under burdens of grief. Some, it may be, are experiencing the infirmities and pains of a diseased body, others are mourning over the loss of friends and relatives, and others still are living in the dread of trials yet to come. There are few of us therefore to whom the inquiry may not be interesting, How is affliction a blessing?

The question may be thus answered. The chastisements which God inflicts upon his children are profitable to them, as they tend under the Divine blessing to promote piety in the heart. Or more particularly, chastisement is useful, because it convinces the believer of his helplessness and misery when left to himself, and of his entire dependence on God; because it leads him to renew his repentance, puts his faith to the test, and strengthens his Christian graces; because it contributes to the exercise of filial submission, and fixes the mind upon the heavenly inheritance. Let us, with prayer for divine assistance, meditate upon these truths.

1. Chastisement is useful, because it tends to convince the believer of his misery, and shows him that without Christ he cannot be happy. And in order to bring this subject more directly before the mind, let us for a moment consider our readers as suffering under the pangs of some great affliction. You will at once agree with us in the position, that if you had more faith, you would have less trouble of mind; or rather that if you had faith sufficient, you would be altogether clear from the deep impressions which lie upon you. Because we very well

know from our own experience, that there are cases in which the most severe bodily pains, or mental distresses, have, so to speak, been neutralized by considerations of a spiritual kind. This is exemplified in the history of the whole Christian Church, and of every individual believer, and most remarkably in the sufferings and deaths of the Martyrs. There is then a certain point of elevation in divine trust, confidence in God, reliance on the providence, grace, and promise of God; that is, a certain degree of faith, which would entirely free you from these trials of mind. We take it for granted that you heartily concur in this, and that you feel, at this very moment of suffering, that no gift of God would so effectually bless you, as this gift of Faith. Your trials and afflictions, therefore, produce in your soul a deep feeling of want. You are now sensible that you need more of the presence of Christ; that your piety is not in sufficient exercise to make you happy under your chastisements. In the moments when forebodings and fears become most oppressive, you are most strongly impressed with the truth, that you still lack a great deal; and your desires are quickened for that measure of faith which shall enable you, with filial confidence, to leave all in the hands of God.

If these are your feelings, you are now ready to acknowledge, that chastisement has already produced in you one part of its intended effect. You are brought to feel that you are totally dependent on God for your comfort; that nothing but high measures of piety can render you independent of these clouds of trial, and that the attainments which you have made are insufficient to this end. You are brought to desire of God that grace which shall be sufficient for you, and to say with the disciples: "Lord increase our faith!" This is one great end of chastisement, to humble man from his self-sufficiency, and make him feel, in the most profound manner, that in God he lives, and moves, and has his being. Afflicted brethren, you never felt in your hours of ease (we venture to affirm) so fully dependent upon God's will, as you do at this present time. Perhaps, if entire prosperity had continued, you would never have felt this persuasion; thus a most important point is gained in your spiritual progress. It is so in this respect, it prepares you for receiving the blessing. It is not God's method, in the ordinary economy of His grace, to give favours of a spiritual kind, until the soul feels its need of them. He "will be inquired of for these things," even



when he purposes to vouchsafe them. It is in answer to earnest longings, pantings, hungering, and thirstings of the spirit, that the Lord manifests himself in the most remarkable manner. You have been brought by chastisement to the very point, where you ought to desire to be brought; and where perhaps nothing but this affliction would have brought you, the total renunciation of your own strength, and the casting of yourself upon the strength of God. Now you begin more deeply to feel your need of Christ. Now you are convinced that something more is necessary than that vague and intermitted trust which you commonly indulge; that Christ must be embraced by your faith, and not visited merely by occasional devotions; in a word, that you must constantly be "looking to Jesus."

If these things are so; if you are persuaded that nothing except strong faith can heal your wounded spirit; if you are conscious that you still lack such faith; if you earnestly and constantly desire it; the question becomes exceeding interesting to you: "Can I attain it?" And if this could be at once answered in the affirmative, to your full satisfaction, it would go far towards an entire banishment from your soul of these poignant distresses. Now in proportion as your as your soul is engaged in seeking this inestimable blessing, in just that proportion will your acts of faith be increased. As Christ becomes more and more present to your mind, you will, with more and more confidence, lean upon him with son-like assurance. And, therefore, without endeavouring to resolve the question, when, how, or in what precise manner, God will give you the grace which you need, it is sufficient for our present purpose to know, that one great end of your affliction is answered, when you are led to commence and persevere in a faithful and earnest application to Christ, as the great Physician.

Long have you wandered, it may be, long slighted this benevolent Redeemer. Like Israel in prosperity, you have forgotten your Deliverer, and have grown restive and rebellious in the rich pastures of his goodness. While the skies were clear, and all around you was smiling, you were remiss in duty, irregular in devotion, lukewarm in affection. Your mountain seemed to stand strong, and in the delights of present enjoyment you could say, "To-morrow shall be as to-day, and much more abundant." Jesus Christ, the Master to whom you had so solemnly, so unreservedly given yourself, has been

cast into the shade by the worldly things on which you have doted. Ah! how little do Christians ponder on the truth, that by their lives of carelessness they are rendering afflictions necessary! While they are at ease in Zion, forsaking their first love, and declining from the path of strict piety, the cloud is gathering darker and darker over their heads; that cloud of judgment and of mercy which is to drive them up from their unlawful resting-places, and alarm them into a renewal of their pilgrimage. Afflicted Brethren! Ye thought not, while ye were at ease, that these trials were in reserve for you, though often forewarned by the preachers of the Gospel, and the experience of your brethren. The trial has now come; you have now to retrace your steps; you now feel that none but Christ can bring you back to happiness; and you are humbly asking for the blessings of his hand. Thus it is that chastisement convinces the believer of his misery, and shows him that afar from the Saviour he can never be at peace.

2. Chastisement is useful, as it leads the believer to see and feel his exceeding sinfulness. It is one of the strongest proofs that our sanctification is imperfect, and our self-love inordinate, that we are wrought upon so much more readily by stripes than by favours. Though the Lord's goodness ought to lead us to repentance, yet we generally observe that the heart grows hard under the smiles of Providence, and thus loudly calls for the necessary strokes of God's correcting hand. It is a favourable indication of reigning grace, when any soul, in the sunshine of great worldly prosperity, is considerate, humble, and constant in walking with God. In too many cases, it is far otherwise. And when sudden affliction breaks in a storm upon the head of one who has been relapsing into carnal security, the surprise and consternation are great and almost insupportable. After the first tumult of the soul, it is natural to look around for some solace or support; and in the case of a true Christian, the resort will at once be to the consolation of religion. Like the little child which strays from its watchful and tender parent, during the hours of play, but hastens back at the approach of alarm, so the believer, overtaken by calamity, awakes from his dream, and endeavours to retrace his steps to the neglected mercy-seat. But ah! in how many case does he here learn his lamentable distance from God; and how mournfully is he made to cry, "O that I knew where I might find Him!" He who is habitually

walking with God does not suffer this, for the whole armour of God protects him from the most unexpected assaults: "he is not afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord:" but the slumbering and lukewarm professor sinks disheartened. In vain does he apply himself to earthly solaces for alleviation of his grief. With shame, and pain of conscience, does he endeavour to ask deliverance of his offended Father. Every petition that he utters, is accompanied with a sense of weakness. The blessedness which once he spake of is gone; the habit of devout waiting upon God is suspended; the way to the throne of grace is obstructed. How confidently would he offer his petitions, if he were persuaded of his own acceptance: how gladly would he plead the promises, if he felt his title to them secured in Christ. But alas! it is not with him as in days that are past, when the candle of the Lord shone on him. His mind has become attached to the earth; his views of the blessed Redeemer are indistinct; he is convinced that his strength has departed, that his faith languishes, and that he is defiled with sin.

Now his repentings are kindled; now he knows how evil and bitter a thing it is to forsake the Lord, and to depart from his fear; and when he considers how long God has borne with him, how many favours he has received, and how brutish has been his ingratitude, his heart is broken, his tears flow, he seeks the lowest place in the dust of abasement, wonders that affliction has not long since overtaken him for his carelessness and neglect, and bows before the Lord without a murmur. At such a time, the language of the afflicted soul will be: "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Let us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord: let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens: we have transgressed and have rebelled, thou hast not pardoned, thou hast covered thyself with a cloud that our prayer should not pass through: mine eye trickleth down and ceaseth not, without any interruption, till the Lord look down and behold from heaven."

Christian brethren, who have known affliction, and have been chastened of the Lord, that you should not be condemned with the world; who have suffered the loss of friends, of health, of property, of reputation, how often has one hour of such trials done more to show you your sins, and humble you

in penitence, than months of ordinary self-examination, or stated means of grace!

When chastisement has its proper operation, the Christian will seek not to be comforted merely, but to be taught of God. "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law." He seeks to know why God contends with him, and lies very low in contrition, when the still small voice of the Lord says to him, "The Lord hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel: O my people, what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee, testify against me." (*Micah* vi.) And this exercise leads to godly sorrow which is not to be repented of. It is under deep affliction that we feel most deeply the connexion between sin and misery, and acknowledge that the connexion is just and holy. Smarting under the rod, we know that the Lord hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities; and that it is of his mercies that we are not consumed.

It was not immediately upon the commission of his atrocious crime, that David was humbled, but when he was chastised and smitten to the earth, hear how he mourns, not so much over his sufferings as his sin: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me." *Psalm* li.

Times of affliction afford some natural facilities for cultivating repentance. Occasions of sin are then removed; the world is excluded. The man confined to the silence of the sick room, or the house of mourning, cannot, by idle pursuits divert his mind. He is forced to think; and to think of his sins. He considers his ways, bewails his transgression, and renews his covenant. He learns to confess, "Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more; that which I see not teach thou me: and if I have done iniquity, I will do so no more." *Job* xxxiv. 31.

Now, in these experiences of the afflicted, there is a real consolation. Such tears are sweet, and it will probably be the unanimous testimony of all true penitents, that they have enjoyed a tender and refined delight in those moments of grief, in which they came to God as a forgiving God, and heard him say to their souls, in accents at once of gentle rebuke and comfort: "Behold I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction," "for mine own sake will I defer mine anger." "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee: In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." *Isa.* liv.

3. Chastisement is useful as a trial of faith.

To use the expression of Bishop Hall, "untried faith is uncertain faith." There often is in professors of religion enough of the semblance of piety to lull their consciences while they are prosperous, but not enough of the reality to support them in time of trial. Adversity makes the exercise of faith needful, and puts the strength of that faith to the test. It is compared to the fire, the furnace, the fining-pot or crucible, because it not only purifies, but tries; it not only consumes the dross, but ascertains the gold.

There is no true believer who does not desire this trial. The very supposition of being found wanting, at the day of judgment fills him with horror. His daily supplication is: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Christian reader, give a moment's thought to this question, "Is your faith sufficient to support you in the hour of death, if that hour (as is very possible) should soon and suddenly arrive?" Are you not ready to sink under ordinary afflictions? How then will you bear this greatest of trials? To adopt the language of Jeremiah, (xii. 5) "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? And if, in the land of peace, whercin thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swellings of Jordan?"

This trial of your faith is plainly important, and it is the office of chastisement to constrain you to such a trial. If your standing in the covenant is so firm, through humble trust in God, that you can say, "But he knoweth the way that I take, when he hath tried me I shall come forth as



gold," you are happy indeed. But this conviction is not likely to be strong in those who have not passed through the furnace. The apostle Peter, in comforting the dispersed saints, explains to them this end of their chastisement, "If need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

We have already seen, in the course of our meditations, some of the ways in which faith is tried by affliction. If any be afflicted he will pray. But there can be no comfort in prayer, where there is not a belief that prayer is heard, and will be answered. The supplication of one who pours out strong crying and tears, in a great fight of afflictions, is a very different thing from the formal addresses of one at ease. The sufferer cannot be consoled until he finds that God is his friend; he cannot find this without faith; and in this manner, most directly, chastisement convinces the soul, that it is still unprovided with the shield of faith, or awakens the exercise of this grace, with great and unspeakable satisfaction. And thus the tribulations which have succeeded one another through life, give us stronger and stronger reliance on God, for the approaching hour of death. At some future day it will be sweet to remember how the Lord sealed us with his Spirit of adoption, in these times of trial. Therefore, "beloved brethren, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you, but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

4. Chastisement is useful, as it strengthens faith, by leading the believer to the promises, and especially to the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no expression in the word of God better suited to reconcile the Christian to trials, than that of the Apostle Paul: "He [that is God,] chastens us for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness"—partakers of His holiness! What words are these! This is the very summit of your desires. This you have been toiling for, and longing after. This you have earnestly implored, and are you now ready to shrink from the very means by which your Father in heaven is about to promote your sanctification? By no

means will you be led to relinquish this appointment of God for your good. Now it is by these very trials that your graces are to be invigorated.

We have seen that these trials disclose the reality and degree of our faith. We may go further and observe that faith is greatly increased and strengthened by the same process. Faith is strengthened by exercise. As the touch, or any natural faculty, becomes obtuse and often useless by want of exercise, or the removal of its proper objects, so faith languishes and seems ready to perish, when those truths which are to be believed are long kept out of the mind. The most valuable truths of the Christian are "the exceeding great and precious promises." He does not feel his need of these promises while he is indulging in that self-pleasing which usually accompanies prosperity. In penning these lines we say advisedly, no man can fully value health who has not been sick, nor appreciate the services of the kind and skilful physician, until he has been healed by him. And thus also, no man can fully prize, or fully understand the promises of the Scriptures, until they are made necessary to his support in adversity. Many of the most precious portions of revelation are altogether a dead letter to such as have never been exercised by the trials to which they relate.

The believer who is in sufferings or straits of any kind, comes to God by prayer; and in attempting to pray, seeks some promise suitable to his precise wants. Blessed be God! he needs not to search long—so rich are the treasures of the word. These promises he takes as the very truth of God. He pleads them at the throne of grace; he believes them, relies on them, rejoices in them. This is faith; these exercises are vital exercises of the renewed soul. So long as the Christian is oppressed with affliction, these exercises must be continual; and in proportion as the trial is great, must the faith be great also, so that he often finds every earthly support cut away, and is taught, with implicit trust, to hang on the simple word of Divine faithfulness. This is emphatically the life of piety; and it is encouraged, developed, and maintained in time of trial.

Affliction is sanctified when we are made to feel that nothing can satisfy us but God, and when we actually wait upon God, and rely on Him as our only hope. It is then that the Christian finds the promises confirmed to him: "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every

son whom he receiveth." "No chastening for the present is joyous, but grievous," &c. Then he rolls his burden on the Lord, commits his way to Him, leans upon Him, trusts in Him with all his heart, so that with a meaning altogether new, he can sing with the Church: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble: therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."

Some appear to entertain the mistaken opinion that the only relief which is afforded to the Christian in suffering, must arise from some hope of speedy deliverance or escape. This is so far from being true, that perhaps the greatest solace under afflictions is derived from direct acts of faith upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and communion with Him; in which the soul is so much absorbed that the present suffering is forgotten, and the mind wholly occupied in its exercises of piety. And herein the chastisement is profitable. In pain, and despondency, and grief, we go to Jesus as to a friend that sticketh closer than a brother: we pour our sorrows into his friendly ear, and ask his aid, and then, when he reveals to us his love, and speaks his promises, and unveils his face, even though he give no assurance that we shall be set free, he does more,—he gives us *Himself*, and faith is refreshed and nourished by receiving him. And shall we not regard as a mercy, that sickness, or that bereavement, or that alarm, which so embitters the world's cup, as to lead us to Christ, that we may see his beauty, and be filled with his love?

Prosperity leaves us to wander, and offers temptations to wandering. Afflictions alarm us and drive us back to the right path. Prosperity casts a glittering but delusive veil over divine realities, and encourages unbelief. Afflictions rend and destroy this covering, and show us the truths of another world. Prosperity seldom leads to increase of faith. Affliction, by God's blessing, is in many cases, made the instrument of sanctification to such as are truly pious.

Dear Brethren, that God who "doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men," offers you in your trials these "peaceable fruits of righteousness." Taste of the sweetness of his promises, and each of you shall say with David: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

5. Chastisement is useful, because it leads the believer to exercise entire submission to the Divine will.

It is an undeniable truth, and one of which the child of

God is very deeply convinced, that "the Lord reigneth," that it is infinitely right and fit that he should reign; and that the first duty of every intelligent being, is to submit promptly, cheerfully, and unreservedly to every ordinance and dispensation of God. It is not very difficult to keep the soul in correspondence with this truth, so long as our self-love is not interfered with, nor our present happiness invaded; but when the sovereignty of God is manifested in despoiling us of our most precious possessions and delights, our souls are often ready to falter, and our weakness betrays itself when, with hesitating lips we endeavour to say, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" It is common to hear those who are ignorant of the Scriptures cavilling at the representation of Job as a man of eminent patience; but where, except in his biography, shall we look for the instance of a man, suffering in one day the total loss of immense wealth, and of ten beloved children, and still saying, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

Without exercise, Christian graces do not grow, and severe afflictions are probably intended to cultivate this important grace of entire submission. Nothing is more common than for persons, under chastisement, to indulge in such thoughts as these, 'I could endure almost any affliction better than this; it is that which I have most dreaded, for which I was least prepared, and now it has overtaken me! It is so strange, new, and unexampled, that I am unmanned, and my soul sinks within me.' These are the symptoms of a rebellious and unsubdued will; the murmurings of a proud and stubborn heart, which must be humbled in the dust. This is just the trial by which, perhaps, God graciously intends to bring down the imaginations and high thoughts of your soul into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And patience will not have had its perfect work in any case, until the afflicted soul is prepared to make no reservation, to claim no direction, but to give up all into the hands of the most wise, most righteous, and most merciful Creator. If the suffering were less, it would not have this humbling efficacy, and he mistakes the nature of the covenant, who supposes that such peculiar trials are excluded. It was, no doubt, a visitation sudden and alarming as a stroke of lightning, when Aaron beheld his sons consumed by fire from the Lord. It was an awful sanction to that rule, "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified." Yet, on seeing and

hearing these things, the bereaved father "held his peace." (*Lev. x. 3.*) It is a bitter medicine, but the soul which is convinced of God's justice and goodness, lays down every thought of rebellion and discontent.

When, in the time of the Judges, the children of Israel gave themselves up in a shameless manner to the worship of idols, they fell under the wrath of God, and were eighteen years oppressed by the Ammonites and Philistines. Still, when they came to themselves, and cried to the Lord, they joined to their repentance lowly submission, and said, "We have sinned; do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee." *Judges x.*

This is the temper which sanctified affliction always begets, so that the prostrate soul dares no longer to impose terms on Jehovah, but yields itself to his sovereign discretion. There is peace in such a surrender, a peace which is altogether independent of any expected mitigation of the stroke.

Wave after wave often goes over the child of God, before he is brought to this state of self-renunciation. Murmuring may for a time prevail, yet the Great Physician, who applies the painful remedy, cannot be baffled, and triumphs to his own glory and the unspeakable benefit of the believer's soul. The Scriptures afford us striking examples of this yielding up of every thing into the hands of God; particularly in the case of David, whose history and experience are given in detail. One of the sharpest inflictions which fell upon this pious man, was the rebellion of his unnatural son, Absalom; and one of the most affecting scenes in the course of this transaction, is the flight of the aged king with the ark: "All the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over." Now, what was the language of David under these circumstances? "The King said unto Zadok: 'Carry back the ark of God into the city; if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation; and if he thus say, 'I have no delight in thee,' behold here am I, let him do unto me as seemeth good unto Him.'" *2 Samuel xv. 26.* Now, we have here exemplified the very frame of soul which each of us should endeavour to maintain under chastisement. For we are not to speak thus, "I can bear this because it cannot be avoided, or, because I hope it is the last of my sufferings." No, my brethren, we are not thus to limit the Holy One of Israel; but let each of us with filial homage say, "Lord, I am in thy hands, in the



best hands, I deserve thy stripes, I yield myself to thy dispensations, thy will be done!" Happy is he who, like David, can look back upon chastisements and say, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." *Psal.* xxxix.

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time," yet, if his rod should long abide upon you; if you are ready, like Job, to cry, from repeated and continued strokes, "He hath set me up for his mark. He breaketh me with breach upon breach. He hath fenced up my way so that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths," yet even then, "remember the patience of Job, and the end of the Lord," and say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

Some may be disposed to think, in the time when all God's waves and billows go over them, that they could acquiesce and be comforted, if they perceived any way of escape, if they could reasonably expect deliverance: and this is the whole of what is sometimes called Christian resignation. Yet, the comfort in this case is merely worldly. The grace of God can do more than this; it can make you willing still to endure, and in enduring still to praise.

Say not, "I could be content if I were sure of deliverance." God has not promised absolutely to remove the chastisement. Perhaps it is his holy will not to deliver. Perhaps it is this very thing in your afflictions which is to ensure you the blessing from the Lord. The apostle Paul earnestly desired, and thrice besought the Lord to deliver him from that trial which he calls the thorn in his flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him. Yet, as far as we are informed, it was continued to the end of his life. But mark the glorious indemnification: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Upon this declaration, the apostle calmly, nay, joyfully goes forward under his burden, singing as he pursues his pilgrimage: "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me, therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then am I strong." The sweet support under every possible calamity is, that God can turn it into a blessing, and, that if we have faith he will do so. With respect, therefore, to the use of afflictions, "all things are possible to him that believeth."

6. Finally. Chastisement is useful, because it leads the believer to look for complete happiness in Heaven only.

And at this stage of our reflections, let us rejoice, dear brethren, that the consolation offered is liable to no exception or abatement; it is adapted to every case; perfect and entire. If the comfort which you need depended upon the hope of deliverance in this world, there would be many cases which we should be forced to leave as hopeless: for there are many in which no expectation of exemption in this life can be indulged. But let the worst, most lingering, and most aggravated instance of suffering be presented, and the hope of heaven is still sufficient to mitigate its ills. You may have been reduced to hopeless poverty; you may have suffered from the treachery and ingratitude of supposed friends, from cruel mockings and persevering calumny; you may labour under incurable disease, or follow to the grave beloved objects of your affections, who can never be replaced in this world. Still, there is a country, and you are rapidly approaching it, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." It is well if you have learned to look beyond all secondary, earthly, imperfect comforts, to God, the source of good, and to that world where all tears are wiped away. It is well if the trial of your faith has enabled you to say "I know in whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day."

This is a benefit of affliction, which is striking and great in proportion to the failure of earthly consolation. For it may be doubted, whether any man fully yields himself up to the view and prelibation of heaven, until he is disentangled and rent away from all hope of blessedness on this side the grave. It is natural to seek resting-places by the way; and trials, losses, sufferings, bereavements, are thrice blessed when they engrave upon our hearts that we have here no continuing city, but must seek one above. So long as we can flatter ourselves with any refuge in this world, we are prone to lean on an arm of flesh, and to look upwards only for the supply of what is deficient here. But let all expectation of worldly peace and satisfaction be cut off, and the released soul, which is truly sanctified, and full of faith, rises, like a bird from the snare, and rejoices to say "My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him. Then shall I be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness!" Think not, however, to enjoy this fruit of chastisement, while you cast

longing and lingering looks on that country whence you came out. Nothing but the hope of a glorious resurrection upheld the apostle Paul, when troubled on every side, perplexed, persecuted, cast down, and (as to the outward man) perishing. Hear the method of his escape out of sorrow, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory."

He is the happy man who dwells most on the thoughts of heaven. Like Enoch he walks with God. Like Job he can say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," &c. Like David he glories, "'Thou wilt show me thy salvation.'" Like Paul he triumphs, "for I am now ready to be offered," &c.

This happiness we sometimes witness; but where have we found it? In the house of prosperity, where death has never invaded the family circle; where all have more than heart could wish; where health, and opulence, and honour unite to expel all care? No! but in the hovel of the poor, where one affliction hath followed another, till earthly hope is almost extinct. In the darkened chamber of mourning, whence all that was most loved and cherished has taken its last flight. In the bed of lingering, incurable disease, and in the very gasp of death! Here religion hath set up her trophies; here, is happiness, here, where things hoped for are substantiated to the believing soul, where things unseen are evidenced to faith by divine influence.

In every case of suffering it is the prime wisdom of the Christian to fix his eyes upon the heavenly crown. In every other hope you may be disappointed, in this you cannot. Try, as you may, all other fountains for your solace, there is a time coming when you must be driven to this. Become familiar with the meditation of heavenly glory! Daily contemplate that joyful deliverance from evil, that indissoluble and ecstatic union with the Lord Jesus Christ! Then, when death lays upon you his cold hand, you can say "I am prepared for this hour. I have longed for this deliverance to meet my Lord in his temple. I have lived in communion with the blessed Lord of heaven." "Lo, this is my God, I have waited for him, and he will save me, this is the Lord, I have waited for him; I will rejoice and be glad in his salvation."

ART. III.—REVUE ENCYCLOPEDIQUE. *Paris.* HISTOIRE DE LA PHILOSOPHIE. PAR M. V. COUSIN. *Paris.*

“THE world by wisdom knew not God.” The history of Philosophy, whether ancient or modern, not only confirms this testimony, but demonstrates that *wisdom* is emphatic in the sentence that makes the declaration. It is not simply, that man, without direct revelation from God, is ignorant of his glories; this ignorance is most conspicuous in philosophy, the boasted wisdom of the human race. From the oldest philosophers of Egypt or India, to the wildest disciple of Kant, or Fichte, the reputed sage has, with few exceptions, entertained more incorrect notions of God, than the peasant whose superstition he has scorned. The latter may not have held the divine unity, he may have cherished many ridiculous aberrations of fancy, but he has seldom stripped superior beings of the first essential attributes of intelligent existence. If he has formed gods in his own image, he has not reduced them lower than himself, by denying their individual consciousness and free volition. Philosophy is the sole parent of such folly.

With these thoughts we rise from the perusal of the publications the titles of which we have placed at the head of this article. We have coupled them together, as containing many sentiments in common with each other, not on account of any connexion in authorship or professed object in writing.

The *Revue Encyclopédique* is a monthly publication at Paris. Each number contains from one hundred and fifty to two hundred pages, sometimes more. It is professedly a general review of all that deserves notice in the passing history of the human mind. Notices of American, English, German, Italian, and French publications, together with those of other countries, find a place in its columns. Many of the articles are very brief; others of the ordinary length for Quarterly Reviews. The number of contributors is very considerable, as appears from the signatures appended to almost every article. Some few of them appear to entertain a degree of respect for the Christian religion, but the general spirit of the publication is what we should term decidedly *infidel*. The following extracts from the number for last December, will convey a clear idea of the spirit that pervades many of the most elaborate and extended articles. It is from a review of

a work entitled, *An Essay towards a system of speculative Philosophy*, by G. Fr. Daumer, Nuremburg. "If the German mind has engaged with ardour in the philosophic career, it is because it expects from philosophy solutions that will lead to the regeneration and salvation of the human race. Our hope, our perseverance, our painful researches will not be disappointed. The German philosophy, far as it seems from the earth, has not only its commission to produce a new theory for practical life—for the organization of society; it has also the sublime destiny to produce, what for man is most sacred and important, that which embraces every thing—a *new religion*. The philosophical system of M. Krauze laid its foundation in 1807; but this great attempt could not be appreciated at once; and, although the author has laboured incessantly to induce his fellow countrymen to establish a [new] religion and society, he has been encouraged by only a few, who have followed him with zeal, devoting their lives to the establishment and propagation of his doctrine. At a later period, the political and religious views of the St. Simonians reached Germany, and then it was recollected that M. Krauze had already promulgated a doctrine (system) that had numerous points of resemblance with that of the St. Simonians. This approximation (of each other's views) promises much fruit; the example given by France will draw the attention of the Germans to a system of religious philosophy born among themselves, and which seems the final result of all the philosophic and scientific labours, which have been the mission and glory of Germany. Thus we see the germs of the future show themselves at the same time in the two most advanced nations of the world; we can unite the philosophic labours of France and Germany; we anticipate the day when these nations will be united in regard to a similar social organization and common religion, which will have given the most complete solution of all the vital questions of humanity.

"It is the duty of all generous men, of all who feel the new wants, so clearly expressed in so many political commotions, to carefully examine all that comes from men who announce a new religion, whether they only prophecy or announce a system of doctrine more or less complete. Let the Germans do this for France, the French for Germany; this reciprocal examination made in sincerity, and with a single desire to conduct humanity towards its destination, will hasten the day of knowledge and general association among men. On this



account, we shall now give particular attention to the work of M. Daumer; for he also seriously thinks, that *a new religion is the result to which all the modern philosophy of Germany tends, and must finally come.* From the title of his book we did not suspect this religious tendency, but it is clearly stated. The author commences thus:

“‘This system recognises God as a spirit, which determines itself in itself and by itself as personality, and has freely conceived in itself the idea of the world and plan of its realization.’ Knowing that M. Daumer is a partizan of the modern philosophy, which is called *Pantheism* by its adversaries, I supposed he would attempt to fill a great blank in this philosophy, one that the system of Krauze seemed only to enlarge to its greatest extent. It is known that Schelling, the renovator of the philosophy called *Pantheism*, placed, as did Spinoza, for the foundation of the science, the *absolute existence* (*l'être absolu*), from which every thing must be derived. He attributed to this being several properties, but his expressions were neither simple axioms nor legitimate deductions of reason. Besides, his object, in seeking for these highest attributes of God, or the absolute existence, seemed only that he might reach nature, and a new construction of nature, made according to the highest attributes of God, who was, in his estimation, the constituent principle of all existence. The highest part of philosophy, that in which the complex attributes of God ought to be explained, such as the divine personality, the absolute self-intelligence (*la conscience absolue*), the sentiment of infinite (*le sentiment infini*), as well as love, wisdom, justice, &c. this part of philosophy in the work of Schelling was a blank, a *desideratum*. We might even demand if his system could reach these questions, if it possessed the necessary scientific instrument, the principal ideas, (the categories, as Aristotle calls them). This part, together with the spiritual world, was neglected for the natural world. Nature, so long viewed with the eyes of materialism and atomism, as abandoned of God, of soul, of life, was to be re-established. It was, in a glorious manner. The grand movement, necessary to produce so many men distinguished by their knowledge of nature, as *Oken*, *Steffens*, &c. &c. took place. By a necessary re-action, it happened that this philosophy, thus incomplete, and giving no satisfaction to the sentiments of the heart, especially to the religious feelings, called forth men to protest against it, accusing it of atheism and ir-

religion. *Jacobi* became the rallying point of all those, who, not having strength enough to follow the new movement, despaired of gaining absolute truth and sound philosophy, or who pretended to found philosophy not upon science, but upon the feeling (*le sentiment*) which manifests itself in another way, in all men; a feeling often vague and sombre, and easily leading to fanaticism, if not enlightened by science. But the principal reproach which *Jacobi* and his partizans brought upon the new philosophy, was its inability to present God as a personal being, having consciousness, feeling, love of self; that it confounded God with nature and thus destroyed all religion. They went farther, and contended that no philosophy could arrive at such a demonstration, because the system of *Spinosa*, which they, without reason, regarded as the principal effort of the philosophic spirit, did not reach it. This leaning (*penchement*) of *Jacobi* and many distinguished men, who rallied round him, had a real, though indirect influence. They added nothing to the stock of human knowledge, but contributed, in spite of themselves, to the developement of philosophy, by pointing out and constantly referring to it, all the great questions, which, for the interest of truth, for the satisfaction of the heart, demanded from it a solution.

“Some philosophers who followed the direction given by *Schelling*, and who had undertaken to fill up the blank in this system, viz: the soul and the spiritual world—attempted the questions, but failed of their solution. *Hegel*, who rebuilt the entire system of *Schelling*, and who, in logic and phenomenology of the soul, undertook principally the analysis and construction of the spiritual world, concealed his inability to give solutions on many points under the language of Christians, to which nevertheless he gave an altogether different meaning. Upon the whole, the labours of *Hegel* and his school advanced the state of many questions. But their true solution, as we think, is found in the philosophical system of *Krauze*, who, while admitting that God is in nature (*le monde*) and nature in him, proves in him a superiority, a domination over the world, consciousness, feelings, a distinct will, all these distinct from the same faculties amongst men, as well as connected with them: consciousness, feeling, will, which constitute the infinite personality of God, and in virtue of which a mutual connexion between man and God can take place, in the relation commonly called religion. It is thus that having reach-

ed its last developement the German philosophy appears to us to have celebrated its union with religion.

“All these thoughts passed our mind, when we read the first words of the work of M. Daumer, seeming to indicate that the author having perceived the blank in this part of modern philosophy, had taken for his principal task a new solution of the great question of the personality of God. We continued the perusal of the work with great attention, but soon found ourselves disappointed. The idea of M. Daumer in regard to the personality of God, is that of Hegel, combined with some secondary ideas of Schelling, especially that which Schelling put at the foundation in God, upon which he displays his absolute existence, his activity, and also manifests himself in the forms of individual creatures. We shall not here attempt an exact account of the views of M. Daumer. We need only remark, that he has presented the idea of Hegel in a more precise form, and deduced the natural consequences without fear of offending Christians. Thus he says distinctly, that God has no consciousness of himself, except in the individual consciousness of men; that men at death enter into the bosom of the absolute existence, without individuality, without personal consciousness, &c. We commend this freedom, although we entertain opposite opinions in regard to these points. Especially do we give our entire approbation to the noble courage with which the author scouts the absurdity of the vulgar faith in rewards and punishments after death, an opinion which defiles human morality by giving it impure motives, and those incompatible with the first principle of morality, viz. to do good, above all, because it is good, because it is, if I may so express myself, the *divinity* of the life of humanity.

“We come now to the views of M. Daumer upon the philosophy of history. Here he is sufficiently new, and expresses his faith in a new religion. See the scheme of the development of humanity according to his conception. We quote his own words:

- I. The man of the primitive world; pantheism of nature.
- II. Transition to the second era of humanity, and passage to historical times: separation of the people.
- III. Paganism and Judaism.
  1. Paganism.
    - a. Religions of Nature.
    - b. Religions of art; Hellenism.

c. Universality: Romanism.

2. Judaism.

IV. Christianity.

a. Primitive Christianity; before Catholicism.

b. Catholicism and reign of the middle ages.

c. Protestantism and the modern Spirit.

V. Absolute religion, and the universal kingdom; or the last era of the world.

VI. Transition to the absolute world (*le monde absolu*;) grand cosmic, catastrophe; transformation of the world.

*The absolute world, (le monde absolu.)*

“We share the opinion of M. Daumer in regard to a state of humanity anterior to the state of opposition, of separation antagonism, a state in which man and humanity were absorbed in the external world, in nature. We approve of his making the second era of the world commence with the separation of the people, and its result in opposition, antagonism. That which he calls the world absolute, the world of unity and harmony, appears to us, as to him, in advance of humanity and the end of its progress.

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“We shall now select some passages from the work, such as appear remarkable and suitable to represent the sentiments of M. Daumer with many other German writers. See what he says of the Christian religion in general: ‘Christianity, long since, so great, so powerful, so mingled with all human affairs, is no longer any thing but *subjectivity*. A little consolation, a little support, a little factitious exaltation, this is all it offers to the individual in the crosses and miseries of life. It is a plaster for the wounds of the heart, it mitigates also the bad temper of the soul, and operates as a curb and spur for the vulgar. But although it has been a universal principle of history, it is so no longer; it no longer produces events of general interest; it no longer determines the march of the human race.....Protestantism is the negative form under which is conceived the new principle. As long as the *positive* new principle, which we need, and which protestantism unconsciously prepares, is not developed, protestantism will afford a relative good, a relative truth, a superiority relative to catholicism. This latter, good, and necessary as it was for the middle ages, is now only the wreck of a great life finished ages ago, without soul, and without value.....Protestantism is the spirit of Christianity, weakened indeed, but still the spirit; catholicism is only a shade of the past. A thing has only

value, general interest, while it can produce something else. Catholicism has long since brought forth negation, Protestantism; Protestantism is in travail to bring forth the new religion.....The new religion will be complete, for it will develop the end of that which is perfected; itself will be perfectible to the last object of the history of the world. It cannot be combatted and undermined by thought, by progress, for it is the religion of thought, of the science of *perfectionment*, since its principal dogma will embrace all in this sublime truth, that God is in the world, and the world in God, and that the life of the world is the life of God.....The new religion will establish itself as the absolute religion, because it tends to realize in all its purity, in all its totality, and in all its absolute harmony, the *Truth*, which is developed the preceding religions, in a manner concealed, fragmentary and even antagonist.

“We have given this work particular attention on account of the importance it has in our estimation.”

Such is French and German philosophy in the nineteenth century, as blind as she ever was in Egypt, India or China; as far from practical forms of truth as any barbarian tribe to which we send our missionaries. Such are the sentiments frequently expressed in the *Revue Encyclopédique*, and of course prevalent among the most learned men in France. We have given this long extract as calculated to make a definite, and as we believe, just impression in regard to the present condition of the French and German mind in many of its most cultivated specimens. With them the Bible is the record of a religion, which, in its time and place, was good, at least relatively so, but now to be classed with other relics of the past; a child's book to be thrown aside by a generation that has become men. With them all the light of the past ages is eclipsed by the superior light of modern philosophy, and that, although this same philosophy is yet unable to solve the fundamental questions either of religion or human government. Light is coming; these men are confident it will come out of modern philosophy; until its appearance we must walk in darkness. They tell us the human mind never goes back, but somewhere in its onward march will find a perfect religion and perfect state of society. Sensible that they have under their feet no solid ground, they make trial of every floating island, and imagine it a *terra firma*, till the next wind of philosophical doctrine reaches them and sweeps away their



refuge. Again they are afloat, crying for help, but refusing all *tried* assistance, mainly because it has been tried. They often boast of their own superiority to past generations, but their own record of their own perplexities, in regard to the most vital questions of humanity, will produce no feeling of envy in regard to their avowed condition. Never have we clasped the Bible with more eagerness to our bosoms, than after the perusal of such works as are now the boasted glory of the nineteenth century, emanating from the more than Athens of the modern world, and eagerly hailed by thousands in the two most enlightened countries of modern Europe.

We have before us three octavo volumes from the pen of Victor Cousin, a professor of philosophy in Paris. The first is a course of lectures delivered in 1828, and is entitled, *Introduction to the History of Philosophy*. A translation of this volume has appeared in Boston. The other volumes are lectures delivered in 1829. One of them is devoted to a rapid sketch of ancient systems of philosophy, together with some notice of the modern schools up to the time of Locke. The remaining volume is devoted to a minute examination of Locke and his school, termed by Cousin the *sensualist school*, (*l'école sensualiste*.) This appellation is given on account of the important place assigned by Locke to the *senses*, as the origin of all our knowledge.

It is not our intention to take an extended review of these volumes. In the way of literary criticism suffice it to say, Cousin is a writer of no common character. His style is vigorous, often splendid, and perfectly clear wherever the thought admits clearness of conception. His works might be safely recommended for the improvement of style, if they could be studied without injury to the mind. There is a degree of vivacity pervading them, that is very uncommon in writings of the same description. We present some extracts, not so much to exhibit his style of language, this being impossible in an English dress, but to exhibit his style of thought, together with some of his most remarkable sentiments. The following will partially answer both these purposes:

“What is the nature of ideas? Are they simple signs, mere words, existing only in the dictionary; and must we then become nominalists? By no means; for names, words, signs by whose assistance we exercise thought, can only be admitted

to use, on condition that we understand them, and we can only understand them upon the general condition of intelligence, that is that we understand ourselves. Signs are, doubtless, powerful aids of thought, but they are not its internal principle. Thought must precede its expression; we do not think because we speak, but speak because we think, and because we have something to say. But if we reject nominalism, must we turn realists? Must we admit that ideas are things existing as does every thing else, and as Malebranche says, 'little beings that are by no means despicable.' Not at all, gentlemen. No, ideas are not things like others. Who has seen ideas? Who has touched them? Who has placed himself in relation to ideas? If, what I very much doubt, the realists have wished to speak of the external existence of ideas, they have fallen into the most evident absurdity. I am inclined not thus to charge men, although, right or wrong, it is commonly done. To escape from this difficulty, shall we turn to the conceptualists, thus completing the known circle of the three great French Schools in the middle ages, upon the question of ideas. This is the usual resting place. But let us understand ourselves; I am ready to admit that ideas are merely conceptions of reason, of understanding, of thought; if my views are admitted in regard to the nature of reason, of understanding, of thought. Think of it closely: is reason, to speak rigorously, *human*, or is it only called human because it *appears in man*? Does reason belong to yourself? Is it your own property? What is it, that you call your own? It is the will, and its acts. I will to move my arm, and I move it. I make this or that resolution, it is exclusively my own, I can impute it to no one else, it is my own property so truly, that if I choose I can at the same instant adopt a contrary resolution, will something else, and produce a different movement; for it is the essence of my will to be free, to do or not to do, to commence, to suspend or change an action whenever I choose. But is the case similar with the perceptions of reason? Reason conceives a mathematical truth: can it change that conception as my will continually changes my resolution? Can it conceive that two and two are not four? Make the attempt, you will not succeed. This phenomenon appears not only in mathematics, but in all other spheres of reason. In morals, try to conceive that justice is not obligatory; in the arts, that such and such forms are not beautiful; you will labour in vain, reason will always impose upon you

the same perception (*la meme aperception.*) Reason does not modify itself at pleasure: you do not think because you will, your understanding is not free. What do I say, gentlemen? It is this: you do not make your own reason, it does not belong to yourselves. All that is free is your own, what is not free is not your own, liberty alone is personality. We can hardly refrain from laughing, when, at the present day, we hear reason spoken against, as a thing belonging to the individual. In truth this a great liberty of declamation, for there is nothing less individual than reason; if it were individual it would be personal, it would be free; we should have power over it, as we have power over our resolutions and acts of the will; we should continually change its acts, that is to say, its conceptions. If the conceptions of reason were only individual, we should not think of imposing them upon others; for to impose individual, personal conceptions upon another individual, would be despotism the most outrageous and extravagant. What is purely individual in me, has no value beyond myself. But the case is otherwise (in regard to reason.) We at once declare those persons insane who do not admit the mathematical relations of numbers, who do not admit the difference between the beautiful and the ugly, between justice and injustice. Why? Because we know it is not the individual who constitutes these conceptions, or, in other words, that reason in itself is not individual, but universal and absolute, and by this title it binds individuals; each individual feeling, not only that he is bound, but that others are bound by the same authority. Reason, then, is not individual, it is not our own; it is not human: for, I repeat, that which constitutes man in his intrinsic personality, is his activity and free will; all that is not voluntary and free is added to man, but not an integral part of man. If these things are admitted, I admit that ideas are the conceptions of this eternal and absolute reason, which we do not constitute for ourselves, but which manifests itself in us and is the law of all individuals: this reason, that Fenelon always found at the end of his researches, from which he endeavoured in vain to separate himself, and which, constantly returning in spite of all his efforts, in all his thoughts, the lowest or most sublime, drew from him this grand conjecture, 'O reason, reason, is it not thou whom I seek?' If such an admission be made, I feel no difficulty to admit that ideas are conceptions of human reason, but yet of reason in itself. But

keep in mind, gentlemen, this reason, which in itself is universal and absolute, consequently infallible, fallen into man as it is, and in connexion with the senses, the imagination and the passions, from infallible has become fallible. It does not deceive itself, but is led astray by that in which it resides; hence all its aberrations: they are numerous, and being derived from the connexion, which, in the actual state of things, is our inevitable condition, they are themselves inevitable. Truth can be perceived by reason in its human state, if I may use this expression, but it cannot always be perceived in the most faithful manner; yet, even then it is not altered or destroyed, it subsists independently of reason, that perceives it not, or perceives it in an imperfect manner. Truth itself is as independent of reason, in its actual state, as reason in itself is independent of man in whom it appears. Thus separated (*i. e.* truth) from the fallible reason of man, it can only be referred to reason not yet fallen into humanity, to reason universal, absolute, infallible, eternal, unconnected with space or time, free from all contact with the relative contingent and error—to that intelligence of which our own, or rather that which makes its appearance in us, is a fragment—to the pure and incorruptible thought which our own merely reflects. This is the theory of Plato, and of Leibnitz, the theory which I have adopted myself, and at another time have so often and fully developed in this chair.

“Ideas, then, are not mere words; nor are they beings; they are conceptions of human reason, and the very rigor of analysis forces us to refer them to the eternal principle of human reason, to absolute reason itself; it is to this reason alone that they belong; they are merely lent, as it were, to other reasons (*i. e.* rational beings). It is there (in the eternal reason) that they exist, but in what manner? We need not search far; they exist spiritually; they are only the mode of the existence of the eternal reason. Now, the mode of the existence of the eternal reason, the absolute spirit, is altogether intellectual, altogether ideal (*tout idéale*). Here all disquisition ends; spirit can only be explained by itself; it alone attests and legitimates its own mode of existence. And remark, that in making ideas, with Plato and Leibnitz, the mode of the existence of the eternal intelligence, you assign to this intelligence what is essential to constitute it a real intelligence, viz. self-comprehension; for the attribute of intelligence is not the ability to know itself, but actual self-knowledge.”

The next passage, which we had designed to give, can only be made tolerably intelligible, by a brief notice of some things previously asserted, in relation to the fundamental constituents of human reason. We give the author's own words, at least, those employed to express the *result* of an extended train of reasoning:

“Reason, however it may develop itself, to whatever it may be applied, can conceive nothing, except by means of two ideas, which always preside over its exercises, viz. the idea of unity and multiplicity, of the finite and infinite, of existence and its manifestation, of substance and phenomenon, of the absolute cause and second cause, of the absolute and relative, of the necessary and contingent, of boundless and finite space, of eternity and time, &c. When we rank together the first terms of these propositions a profound analysis identifies them; the same is true in relation to all the second terms, so that from all these propositions compared and combined, there results a single proposition, a single formula, which is the formula of thought itself, and which may be expressed according to the case, by the one and the multiple, time and eternity, finite and infinite space, &c. Finally, the two terms of this so comprehensive formula, do not constitute merely a dualism, in which the first term is upon one side, and the second upon the other, without any other relation, except to be perceived at the same time by reason; they have another essential relation, unity, existence, substance, immensity, eternity, &c. the first term of the formula is cause, absolute cause necessarily developing itself in the second term, viz. multiplicity, the finite, phenomenon, the relative, &c. The result of all this, is, that the two terms and their relation of generation, which derives the second from the first, are the three integral elements of human reason.”

We now give a passage that may have to some of our readers the appearance of novelty, if not of truth; a bold attempt to subject infinite depth to the easy measurement of the very finite line employed by human thought:

“There are in human reason two elements and their relation; three elements, then—three ideas. These three ideas are by no means the arbitrary product of human reason; so far from that, in their triplicity and their unity, they consti-



tute the very foundation of this reason; they appear there to govern it, as reason itself appears in man to govern him. What is true of reason humanly considered, is true of reason considered in itself; that which constitutes the foundation of our reason is the foundation of the eternal reason, viz. a triplicity which resolves itself in unity, and a unity that develops itself in triplicity. The unity of this triplicity is alone real; at the same time, this unity would entirely perish if confined to any one of the three elements which are necessary to its existence; they all have, therefore, the same logical value, and constitute an indecomposable unity. What is this unity? The divine intelligence itself. There, gentlemen, even to that height, upon the wings of ideas, to speak with Plato, our intelligence soars; there, see the thrice holy God, whom the human race recognises and adores, and at whose name the author of *the system of the world*,\* at eighty years of age, always bowed with uncovered head.

“Gentlemen, we are far above the world, far above humanity, above human reason. For us, nature and humanity are no more, we are only in the world of ideas. Can we now hope, since it is no longer a question concerning either nature or humanity, that the preceding theory will not be regarded as Pantheism? Pantheism is, at present, the bugbear of feeble minds; we shall see, on some other occasion, to what it comes. In the meantime, I hope I shall not be accused of confounding with the world, that eternal intelligence, which, prior to the world, prior to humanity, existed in the triplicity that is inherent in its nature. But, if at this height, philosophy escapes the charge of Pantheism, she will hardly avoid an accusation of a directly opposite kind, and which she willingly accepts, that of wishing to penetrate the profundity of the divine essence, incomprehensible as it is thought to be. We are told it must be regarded as incomprehensible. There are men, reasonable beings, whose business it is to understand, who believe in the existence of God, who, nevertheless, are unwilling to believe, except under this express reserve, that this existence be regarded as incomprehensible. But what do they intend by this? That this existence is absolutely incomprehensible? But that which is absolutely incomprehensible can have no relation with our understandings, cannot be admitted by them. A God who is absolutely in-

\* La Place. *Trans.*

comprehensible by us, is a God who, for us, does not exist. In truth, what could a God be for us, who had not thought fit to give his lowly creature sufficient intelligence to reach himself, to comprehend and exercise faith in him. What is it to believe? It is to understand, at least, in some measure. Faith, whatever may be its form, vulgar or sublime, faith can be nothing but the consent of reason to that which reason comprehends as true. Such is the foundation of all faith. Take away the possibility of knowledge, and there remains nothing to believe, the very root of faith is taken away. It is said that if God is not entirely incomprehensible, he is so, in part, at least. Be it so; but let the measure be determined, and I will maintain that this measure of the comprehensibility of God is precisely the measure of human faith. God is so little incomprehensible, that that which constitutes his nature is, precisely, ideas, ideas whose very essence it is to be intelligible. It has been much debated whether ideas represent or not, whether they are conformed or not, to their objects. In truth, the question is not whether ideas represent, for ideas are above all things; the true, philosophical question is, rather, if things represent, for ideas are not the reflection of things; things are the reflection of ideas. God, the substance of ideas, is essentially intelligent and essentially intelligible. I will go farther, and to this reproach of pusillanimous mysticism, will reply from the very height of Christian orthodoxy. Do you know, gentlemen, what the theory is that I have now exhibited? Nothing but the foundation of Christianity itself. The God of Christianity is three and one at the same time, so that any accusations against the doctrine which I teach, strike at the root of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. The dogma of the Trinity is the revelation of the divine essence made clear in all its profundity, brought entirely under the cognizance of human thought. It does not appear that Christianity believes the divine essence inaccessible, since it teaches this doctrine to the most humble mind, making it one of the first truths inculcated. But, cry they, do you forget, this truth is a mystery? No, I do not, but do not you forget, this mystery is a truth."

If our readers are not already fatigued with abstractions, we now present a passage, where the Gordian in the question of creation is fairly cut through, if not really unravelled. The author's conclusion is all that we can insert:

“To create, is a thing easily conceived, for we constantly do it ourselves. We create every time we do a free act. I will, I make a resolution, I make another, then another, I modify, suspend, or pursue it. But what do I do? I produce an effect, which I refer to no one of you, but to myself as cause, the only cause, so that, in relation to the existence of this effect, I seek nothing above or beyond myself. See, then, what it is to create. We create a free act; we create it, I say, for we refer it to no principle (cause) superior to ourselves, we impute it to ourselves exclusively. It was not, it began to exist in virtue of the principle of proper causality which we possess. So, to cause is to create. But with (from) what? with nothing? No; but, on the contrary, with the foundation of our existence, with all our creative force, with all our liberty, our free activity, and our personality. Man does not bring from nothing the action that he had not performed till he attempted to perform it, he drew it from his power to perform it, from himself. Here is the type of a creation. The divine creation is of the same nature. God, if he is a cause, can create; if he is an absolute cause, he cannot but create; and in creating the universe, he does not bring it from nothing, he derives it from himself, from that power of causation, of creation, in which we feeble men have a share; all the difference between our creation and that of God, is the general difference between God and man, the difference between the absolute and the relative cause.

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“God creates then, he creates in virtue of his own creative energy; he draws the world, not from the nothing, which is not, but from himself, the absolute existence. This eminent characteristic being an absolute creative force, which cannot but pass into act, it follows, not simply, that creation is possible, but that it is necessary; it follows that God creates incessantly, infinitely; creation is inexhaustible and constantly maintained. More than this; God creates from himself. God is in the universe as the cause is in the effect, as we ourselves, feeble and limited causes, are, so far as we are causes, (*en tant que causes*) in the limited and feeble effects that we produce.”

In a subsequent lecture the author speaks thus:—

“In human reason we have found three ideas, which it does not constitute, but which govern it in all its applications.

The passage from these ideas to God was not difficult, for these ideas are God himself."

Thus reasons a philosopher who claims to be Christian, who ascribes the whole progress of the human mind, of civilization since the middle ages, to the Christian religion. Here are his own words: "Christianity is the foundation of modern civilization, they have the same destiny, they share the same fortunes," &c. Cousin often asserts the same thing in the most unequivocal terms, a proof that his penetration is not always blinded by philosophical theories.

The extracts which we have given are principally from the fifth lecture of the *Introduction to the History of Philosophy*. Another sentiment found in this volume deserves notice. It is substantially this: the virtues of a victorious hero are nearly in proportion to his success; the victorious nation in war is always in the right; the vanquished *deserved* to be trodden under foot. All this follows from the principle, that every great change in human affairs is a step gained in the *progress of humanity*. Whatever power is overcome must be one that had done its work, and then only stood in the way of something better. On these principles Buonaparte was a saint, with but an occasional blemish, till the battle of Waterloo, where he became a most guilty man, abundantly deserving banishment from the world.

The following sentiment is found at the commencement of the fourth lecture:

"A grand thought, a divine thought is also in the physical world, but it is there without knowing itself; it is only after crossing the different kingdoms of nature, and by a progressive labour, that it arrives at self-consciousness in man; there it knows itself very imperfectly at first, by degrees it comes not only to self-consciousness, but to the full knowledge of itself."

The sentiment of Cousin in regard to revelation may be gathered from the sixth lecture of this volume.

"Inspiration, in all languages, is distinct from reflection; it is the perception (*l'aperception*) of truth, I understand it of essential, fundamental truths, without the intervention of will or personality. Inspiration does not belong to us. There we are simply spectators; we are not agents, at least our action consists only in the consciousness of what is done: there

is no doubt even at this early period,\* activity, but it is activity without voluntary reflection. Inspiration has, for its character enthusiasm; it is accompanied by that powerful emotion which elevates the mind above its ordinary subaltern state, developing the sublime and divine part of its nature:

“*Est Deus in nobis, agitante calescimus illo.*”

“In fact, man, during the marvellous state of inspiration and enthusiasm, unable to refer it to himself, refers it to God, and calls the primitive and pure affirmation, revelation. Is the human race wrong? When man, conscious of his feeble agency in inspiration, refers to God the truths which he did not make, but which govern him, is he deceived? Certainly not. For what is God? I have told you: thought in itself, absolute thought in its fundamental elements, eternal reason, the substance and cause of the truths which man perceives. When man refers to God truths that he cannot refer to this world, nor to his own personality, he gives credit where he ought—the affirmation of absolute truth without reflection, is a true revelation. You then see why, in the cradle of civilization, he who has more than his fellow men, of this marvellous gift of inspiration, passes for the confidant and interpreter of God. He is so for others, gentlemen, because he is so for himself; he is so for himself, because he is really so in a philosophic sense. See the origin of prophecy, of priesthood, of religious worship.

“Remark also a peculiar effect of this phenomenon of inspiration. When urged by the vivid and rapid perception of truth, transported by inspiration and enthusiasm, man tries to bring forth what passes within him, to express it in words, he can only employ words of the same character with the phenomenon to be translated. The necessary form, the language of inspiration is poetry, and the primitive speech is a hymn.”

If we understand all this, the religious hymns of every barbarous tribe are upon the same footing with the Christian Bible. Besides, as reflection succeeds this spontaneous reason, here called revelation, philosophy is above any revelation that can be made, it is the product of the mind in an advanced

\* At the only period when inspiration takes place, according to this author, viz: in an uncultivated state of mind.



state. This is a sentiment extensively held in France and Germany. It is one, too, that very easily finds access to a reflecting mind, that is not occupied by confidence in the Christian Scriptures, and doubtless may overthrow a degree even of that confidence that would be unshaken by all the arguments of *gross* infidelity.

We wish, in a few words, to express an opinion as to the general tendency of Cousin's philosophy. In the first place, it seems admirably calculated to destroy all moral distinctions. We admit, our author distinctly recognises the grand principles of morals in many passages of the volumes before us; but all impression of their authority is destroyed by his leading sentiments. If the creation and providence of God are necessary manifestations of the divine causative existence, they can have no moral character, in the common sense of the expression. The actions of creatures, whose reason is only a fragment of the divine reason, can, of course, have no morality different from the divine. All human conduct is, upon this scheme, a part of the divine agency. All things, all events, must be equally good. The fall of millions, in warfare between man and man, is really matter of no more regret, connected with no more guilt, than the autumnal disrobing of the forest.

In the second place, this system affords little ground for belief in the future individual existence of the soul. The fragment of the divine intelligence now manifest in a human body, may be absorbed into the divine essence at death, or it may pass into some new manifestation, without either past or coming responsibility. We do not say that such is the opinion of Cousin, but it seems to us the only legitimate consequence of his system.

Thirdly: upon the scheme before us, although the Christian religion may be complimented for the past, it can hold no commanding situation in the human mind, after philosophy has fairly executed its mission, after reflection has carried our intelligence into the higher and purer region of abstract thought.

Fourthly: Cousin may not choose for himself the appellation Pantheist, but we know of no other that meets our idea of his system as a whole. But Pantheism, though more sublime, far more seductive, is hardly better than Atheism. It interests the imagination, but its legitimate tendency is to destroy all moral sanction.

To conclude an article, already longer than we design-

ed: The state of French and German philosophy is such as to enlist the deepest feelings of every Christian, whose bosom glows with benevolence to the whole race of his fellow men. The science and literature of two among the most advanced nations of the world, is employed far more successfully against the religion of Christ than is any superstition of India. The latter cannot seduce an Englishman or American: the former does this daily.

Now we ask, can the friends of the *Christian* religion do nothing to resist this terrible enemy? Are we to combat the superstitions of heathenism, and still not even ask what can be done to resist a more dreadful foe in Christian lands? We pretend not to say what definite steps can be taken to favour the cause of revealed truth in either France or Germany; but while God is the hearer of prayer, the subject deserves consideration. A single thing may be suggested: any measure that would favour the increase of piety and knowledge of the truth, among the lower and especially middle classes of France or Germany, would at length extend the benefit to the more refined classes. The literati of Germany would, of course, scorn any such attempts to reach their minds; but will they not at some time return to the religion of the Bible, and will not this be a consequence of prayers and efforts, which a preceding generation had ridiculed? Is it not a want of faith and true Christian zeal, that leads us to suppose the German philosopher beyond the reach of divine mercy, when exercised through any of its common channels? Were Christian writers in this country and in England, always upon the alert to expose the vagaries of infidel philosophy, and place over against it the truth of God, great results might at some time be anticipated. We are ever to remember, that *God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;—that no flesh should glory in his presence.*”

We add a single reflection. Just before our Saviour appeared upon earth, there was prevalent a general expectation that some extraordinary person was soon to visit mankind, and produce a highly beneficial revolution in the world. While the Jewish prophets uttered the oracles of God, Roman poets, Indian philosophers, Persian magi, were the unwitting heralds of the Prince of Peace. Like this, is one of the signs of the present time. The Christian world looks for the se-

cond coming of Christ, in the display of Millennial glory, as an event near at hand. French and German philosophy predicts a new religion and new social state, as the grand result of all preceding changes. The wisdom of the philosopher will doubtless disappoint him—the faith of the Christian may, as it respects the precise time, but cannot in the end. “Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

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#### ART. IV.—THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH IN RELATION TO SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

MEN often come slowly to the adoption of the principles of the merest common sense, even in the doctrines and duties of religion. How much Christianity has lost whilst its disciples have been dallying in hesitation about obeying the simplest instincts of duty, we believe to be incalculable. They never ponder so deliberately, and with such cautious progression, as when an effort is proposed to take advantage of the very postulates of reason in promoting the triumph of the Gospel. The strongest illustration of this most anomalous fact is furnished by the history of the Church in regard to its efforts to control the education of the young. For it is no late discovery that the mind of childhood is *susceptible* of permanent moral impressions. No theme can claim a more venerable prescription to the last honours of triteness than this. And if the world are really ignorant of the connexion of early education with the destiny of the individual, it is for some other reason than the want of common fame to proclaim it: for it has been set forth in all conceivable forms, from the Proverbs of Solomon to the distich of Pope, and from the staring apophthegm of the copy-book, to the rant of the college rostrum. It is thus that the great truth has been suffered to evaporate, even since the dispensation of the Gospel. The praise of education has echoed from the pulpit too, in good set phrase, but the Christian world slumbered upon the sermons until the Archbishop of Milan showed that the subject was capable of some practical inferences. But even this hint, like many others from that

disfavoured quarter, was despised by Protestant Christendom for more than two hundred years, and we have only just now celebrated the lapse of the first half century since the introduction of a universal system of religious education for children.

And yet it has taken that half century to carry the Church through the first process of awakening. We allude not to the agitation of contingent questions of lawfulness and expediency, to the suspicions and misgivings, or to the positive opposition and denunciation, which the *Sunday School* system encountered. For, that there prevailed during that period a singular frigidity on the general subject of the moral training of children, is shown by the absence of all effort to furnish a substitute for the plan of Raikes, acknowledged to be worthy of all commendation in its design, but which, it was pretended, could be prosecuted only by desecration, and the accomplishment of which was, after all, essentially impracticable. But, confining our observations to the earliest features of the plan itself, and to the Christian zeal which it enlisted, we say it is surprising, that it is only since the late Jubilee that the Church has seemed to begin to be aware of the divine designs in this new organization. Cases of—what may be called, in reference to the efforts of teachers—*accidental* conversions of children, occasionally occurred, and they were proclaimed abroad as unprecedented wonders, and received with doubt or incredulity by the religious public. But when the Spirit of God moved through a church, the Sunday-School room presented itself in a new light to the revived Christians and the recent converts. Instead of being looked upon as a receptacle for street-idlers; a penitentiary; or, at best, as a place where the rudiments of reading might be conscientiously tasked into a child by making the Bible his horn-book, it presented the aspect of a gate of heaven; and teachers felt the appalling truth that the *souls* of these children were committed to them, and that there was no other way opened for their deliverance from hell than had been opened to themselves. They were led to a more solemn consideration of the nature of the office itself; and it soon becomes evident to a candid mind, that when Providence has assigned any moral field to its culture, there is a responsibility connected with the trust proportionate to the interest involved. They had, heretofore, been too apt to consider that it was a business of generous self-denial that they had assumed, and that the service

was so wholly gratuitous and voluntary, that it was something like a Roman Catholic supererogation to attend to it. But when they found that they were, as Christian subjects, bound to this duty as strongly as any *other* missionary, or minister is to his charge, the trust was seen to be as serious as any that could be committed to them, and that they were held by their fidelity to their Redeemer, to bend themselves to this commission until their Master should designate some other service. Thus, at length, there has arisen a dawn of promise that the true fundamental principle of the Sunday School institution is about to be extensively understood, and made the object of direct aim in all its provisions.

It has resulted from the recognition of this character of the service, that the efforts of teachers to become more practical have been directed to simplify and adapt the system of instruction. According to the ancient mode of practice (we speak, of course, generally,) it seems to have been considered that the injunctions of the Gospel are not intelligible by children. The precepts of morality and the ceremony of prayer were strictly enjoined, but the duties of faith and repentance were, tacitly, postponed to a season of more intellectual maturity. Children were practically considered as placed by their minority under a religious disability. The mode of teaching, the phraseology in which they were alluded to, the absence of direct endeavour to bring them to God, all showed that their training was prospective. It is true, the Church and pious parentage provided for their religious instruction, but it was after a manner which insured in many cases a lasting repugnance to the obligations of religion.

To how few of the present generation are the religious reminiscences of their childhood delightful! How many of us now recur, with no agreeable associations to the Sunday penance of reading the Bible and reciting the catechism, with the impression still vivid in the memory that the tedious intervals of the Sabbath services were to be *killed* by a course of reading which it was not expected we should understand! And yet all this waste of time and application was unnecessary, and these remembrances of the Sabbath days of childhood might be universally, as, in many instances, they are, cherished with unmingled feelings of happiness, had parents been alive to the fact that no book is more easily made entertaining than the Bible, or more intelligible, by familiar ex-



planation, than most doctrinal catechisms. But the secret lies in a short line—the conversion of children was not expected and laboured for as a direct object. With a selfishness, like that of the apostles who would have restricted the announcement of the Gospel to the lineage of Abraham, the Church has comparatively disregarded, not only the claims of Paganism, but of its own children (as a class) on its guardianship. And God seems to have chosen, by a dispensation more evident and striking than even Peter's vision, to awaken Christians, as he did the Jews, to the conviction that they have taken a narrow view of his benevolence. There is credible evidence for the belief, that during the year ending in May last, the Holy Spirit has been "poured out also" upon five thousand Sunday School pupils. The announcement has created as much astonishment as did the calling of the Gentiles; but the mere statement of such an unequalled accession to the visible Church from the ranks of youth demands the attention of that Church, and an inquiry into the nature of a system which must produce such an influence upon its future history. It is a subject for deliberate investigation, whether it be of God or not; and the decision should be made whilst its infancy may be taken advantage of to dispose of it in the easiest and most effectual manner. If the fact be admitted, all the abstractions of the argument are superseded, and we had better imitate our mother of Jerusalem, "hold our peace and glorify God," and obey his Providence.

In our judgment, the system of Sunday School instruction is a means, favoured by God, of supplying the deficiencies of ordinary ministerial duty, and of carrying into more extensive effect the designs of his mercy. It is not necessary to suggest any hypothesis respecting the moral and intellectual points of difference in the character of the people addressed by the apostles and of those of our day, which have caused a change in the style of preaching and in the discharge of other ministerial functions. Nor need we stop to fix the charge of delinquency upon the Church for not providing for the instruction of every class of the community. Taking admitted facts, we may, without prejudice, assert, that owing to the general character of preaching, the mixed nature of our congregations, their number, variety of employments, peculiarity of situation, and other causes, it is impossible for a single individual to apportion his services to all. This could not be effected unless every minister had a number of lay assistants,

of suitable age and qualifications, who should devote themselves exclusively to the business of private visits and meetings for instruction, whilst he should direct their labours, and give his chief care to the preaching of the word. Such an organization, we fear, is generally impracticable. Scarcely a congregation could be found where there is a sufficient number of pious men disengaged from business, who could do the service acceptably. The nearest approach to this desirable system is furnished in the adaptation of Sunday Schools to the distinct objects contemplated. In this manner, the intelligent members of every church might be employed, on the Sabbath, in superintending classes of domestic servants and other adults, white and coloured, male and female; in Bible classes, comprehending *all* the young persons of the congregation, and in similar classes for others out of it. It is easy to see how much a *pervulgate* of instruction would change the face of the Church, by making its members personally active in the great duty of teaching the ignorant, simplifying the instructions of the desk to the young, and diffusing the influence of the Bible directly amongst all classes and conditions. This subdivision of labour should have been learned long since by the Christian ministry, from Jethro, "And Moses' father-in-law said unto him, the thing that thou doest is not good; thou wilt surely wear away, both thou and this people that is with thee; for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. Hearken now unto my voice; I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: be thou for the people toward God, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: and thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. *Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, and rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.*" Such a band of efficient assistants to the ministry might well be included under the denomination of "teachers," in the apostle's catalogue of the agents delegated by Christ for the edifying of his body—the Church. *Eph.* iv. 11, 12. *1 Cor.* xii. 28.

The Church has commenced, and in some portions made some progress in filling up this large design. But as a faithful prosecution of that branch of it which is applied to chil-

dren will naturally result in its gradual extension to all grades of the destitute, it will be sufficient to limit our attention to this preliminary stage. And yet we must, in deference to human sense and the weakest Christianity, spare an elaborate argument to prove the value to individuals, to families, churches, neighbourhoods, and society universally, of having children taught stately the principles and practice of religion from the Scriptures; watched over; and visited with affection and interest, followed in sickness, misfortune, and separation; by kind, prudent, and intelligent Christian friends. The proposition is too self-evident to need an argument, and, as one should think, the object of too much self-interest to require enforcement. These services in detail are beyond the power of any minister, with whatever variety of gifts he may be endowed, unless he superadd the faculty of collecting all these classes of persons together in one place, and instructing them with adaptedness to each case. To a minister, a faithful association of Sunday School teachers is the hundred eyes and hundred hands he is often disposed to wish for, and no human agency is capable of yielding him such efficient assistance. They supply the loss children have long sustained in the services of the sanctuary, by imparting a knowledge of the history and doctrines of the Bible in a manner which their immature minds can comprehend. They thus prepare a generation of hearers who are more likely to attend to, and understand the discourses of the pulpit, in consequence of their noviciate in the schools, and give the best security for becoming intelligent, stable, and useful members of the Church.

If the institution be recognised in the rank of importance to which we have assigned it, it is easily seen that the Church, as a body, has a deep interest in it, and is called on to be vigilant of its course. It must cease to be considered an adventitious appendage to the house of worship. Teachers must be regarded in another light than as amateurs of the science of school keeping, and must meet with some more cordial recognition than the unmeaning complacency with which they are commonly greeted as engaged in a harmless employment, for which they have some whimsical predilection. The Sunday School must be identified with the Church as positively as any of the other external means of grace. It claims the patronage and prayers of every Christian, and should enlist their active interest in its support. In it is their

hope for their own children, and there is the best cooperation they can have in training their families. In it are educating their successors in the visible church, and *there* is the strong-est human guaranty for its continued purity and prosperity. Individual members should well and prayerfully deliberate, before they relinquish the privilege of guiding these minds, and decide that Providence does not call them to be efficient agents in the cause. They well know that Christ denounces unprofitable servants, and before a professed follower determines to avoid the duty, or is contented to spend the Sabbaths without being engaged in some scheme of benefiting others, let he or she be certain that the reason is such as will bear the test of the Gospel requisitions.

We are commonly left to our own perceptions to judge when circumstances indicate any special duty as the assignment of Providence. If we seriously consider the history and present attitude of Sunday schools, we suppose it impossible to come to any other conclusion than that they have been sanctioned by the Saviour, not only as a means of hastening his triumph, but that none of his followers might be without a field for active and direct service. Its operations are so multifarious, that we can scarcely imagine a case of total disqualification. If precluded by any circumstances from direct teaching, the private member may still exert a general influence in furtherance of the design. One of the concurrent blessings of the plan is, that it opens so wide a door to practical benevolence, and such a person may be excellently employed in visiting the poor and the ignorant, to inform them of the advantages of the school, to impress them and their children, by their kind familiarity, with favourable ideas respecting it. If poverty or sickness prevent their taking advantage of the offer, an opportunity is afforded of giving the most conclusive evidence of sincerity and disinterestedness, by guiding them to means of relief. In like manner they may make friendly visits at the homes of those who are already scholars; where they are sure of an unaffected welcome. By this proof of earnestness they open a way to the confidence and the consciences of the child's family, whom they may persuade to an attendance on the means of grace, and encourage to the pursuit of holiness. *Secular* and moral reformation, at least, will be easily

promoted in this way; and there is no surer pioneer of religion, among the uncultivated, than philanthropy. Its whole range is opened to the person who is willing to be the friend of the Sunday scholar's family, and an entire neighbourhood may be blessed for the sake of the youngest of its inhabitants.

The office of teacher or any other agent in the Sunday school is an unquestioned passport to any household, poor or rich, and the latter rank of the congregation, as well as the former whether in or out of it, are accessible to such visitors. Sensible parents, and well meaning people generally, will not deem such attentions intrusive. The persuasion that the welfare of their own offspring is an object of a stranger's solicitude, will soften many a rugged disposition, and open the heart to unwonted emotions. And in spiritual humanity it will be difficult to decide which is the stronger claimant for Christian compassion, the child of the poor or rich.

Energetic action is one of the best means of promoting healthful personal piety. It is the indolent professor who is most liable to despondency, and to a disrelish of spiritual duties. The prescription of the apostle springs from the principles of nature, as well as religion, that if Christians expect to be otherwise than 'barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of their Lord,' they must add 'energy' to their 'faith.' In the words of an eminent philosophical and evangelical observer of the times, "there is, manifestly, something which requires to be balanced or adjusted, and kept in equipoise, between the principle of faith, and the principle of action. The one has a tendency to exclude the other, or to overpower it. But Christian excellence consists in the preservation of this balance; and the preservation of it, we must add, greatly depends upon the circumstances of the times. Now, perhaps, for a season, faith and energy are both strongly stimulated; and the highest style of Christian heroism is reached. Again, the inducement of action being slackened, faith is deprived of the invigoration it had received from the contest with the antagonist principle; it triumphs, or rather seems to triumph, for a moment; but presently becomes extravagant, then imbecile; and at length, utterly inert. We need not be surprised to find that faith, though heaven-born, can neither live nor be productive alone. Excellence of all kinds, physical, intellectual, and spiritual, is the product, not of the simple operation of some one principle; but of the op-



pugnant forces of two or more powers, which have a natural fitness to counteract each other.”\*

We think this remark pertinent to our argument, as furnishing the highest motive next to the immediate desire of glorifying God, that can be presented to stimulate the zeal of the disciple, and as another incentive to the Church to seize with eagerness any new mode that is offered of elevating the standard of piety.

Collectively, the Church is bound to provide for this department upon an adequate scale. The necessary accommodations and facilities should be furnished by it; and the care of these details should not be superadded to the duties of the teachers, any more than the financial concerns of the congregation should be laid upon the minister. The time ought long since to have arrived when every house of worship should have a separate building for its Sunday Schools, admitting of the necessary subdivision of pupils, in distinct apartments, with a chapel for at least occasional services for the children exclusively. A small fund would furnish an amount of moral and religious reading sufficient to benefit many hundreds of families at once. Over these circles of subordinate agency, the minister and other ecclesiastical officers should maintain a kind superintendence. They should consider it part of their pastoral and official duty to inspect their operations; to be familiar with the process and nature of the instructions afforded. The maintenance of purity and orthodoxy requires that they should not be ignorant of the character, capacity, and views of those who have the almost exclusive care of a large portion of their rising charge. The schools constitute, literally, the nurseries of the Church: from them are continually presented applicants for union with it, and their character will soon determine that of the whole body. The official guardians of the young, no more than parents, should feel that this part of their charge is alienated to the teachers. Parental fidelity is important to maintain the influence of the teacher, and the spiritual officers are bound to extend their episcopacy over persons holding such responsible stations as the directors of the minds of the young.

In most churches at this day, (we again remind our readers that our observations are general, and refer to the Christian community at large,) the only ecclesiastical provision made

\* ‘Saturday Evening,’ Art. xii.

for the benefit of the children, is the requirement of a regular recitation from the catechism of the denominations to which they are attached. These examinations occur, commonly, at intervals of several weeks, during which there is no pretence of actual supervision by the official overseers. The formularies which are to be repeated by rote, mostly comprise a system of theology arranged as a science, and composed in technical phraseology. When these sententious definitions are duly committed and rehearsed, the maternal offices of the Church are discharged, and the nurslings are dismissed, with perhaps some common-place advice, until the next recurrence of the ceremony. Now, we have no hesitation in saying that such exercises, unaccompanied by plain exposition calculated to enter the understandings of the young, and without a faithful aim to reach their hearts, are not only without any present profit, but are likely to engender an aversion from them which may end in an invincible misesteem of this portion of the standards. Under the most faithful and popular conducting, these brief examinations must be meagre and superficial, and in all respects inferior to the practical, constant, and exclusive services of the Sunday school teacher. Formerly many children in our congregations had no opportunity of access to religious influence, excepting such as the catechetical class might afford. Their parents, even the pious, were often satisfied that they had met their obligations by requiring their preparation for their tasks; and if not pious, they sent them as one of the acts of courtesy, which the moral world deems fit to be occasionally shown to the institutions of religion. For all these deficiencies the Sunday School should be welcomed as a relief, and if not adopted as a substitute, yet admitted as a better scheme, to the spirit and mode of which the old one should be made to conform.

As a means of grace, too, which has been peculiarly blessed to the teachers who undertook the service before their own conversion, it is of great moment that an anxious eye should be kept upon this class of the congregation. To decide that professors only should have charge of the schools, would discard a vast number of efficient teachers, and remove them from an influence which has been so remarkably favoured. Besides, a disposition that inclines persons to engage in a service of this nature, almost certainly implies the existence of some degree of inclination to attend to the claims of religion, and in this state of mind they are most likely to be

faithful to their charge, and to be led to set an example of submission to Christ. But it is, undoubtedly, prudent that these individuals should not be unknown, and that they should be the objects of special watchfulness and spiritual anxiety.

The ministry have not yet exhibited the intimate and active connexion with this department of their charge that is expected from them. The general system owes much to their approbation and encouragement, but they have not begun to consider it is a prominent part of their pastoral duty to take care of their schools. Would they be content to have several hundreds of their congregation taken from their immediate control, and taught by thirty or forty individuals, of whom they know little more than that they are communicants in good standing? And is it lawful for them to be indifferent to, or ignorant of, the nature of the course of teaching which is applied weekly in the training of the most important portion of their people? How deeply must those principles be fixed which a zealous teacher plants in the mind of a young scholar! The circumstances of this education are infinitely more favourable for the success of his efforts than those of a pastor can ever be. Each of *these* ministers has a congregation of but eight or ten, whose attention is necessarily concentrated on him; he has the facility of direct personal appeal to each one, and this for a length of time equal to that employed by the minister in the public services; he is able to visit them every week, to follow and direct them in all their pursuits, and confirms his official authority by the affection which his kindness and interest have excited. Under such care his mind is formed, and the impressions can hardly be counteracted. The sermon from the pulpit is not adapted to his capacity; and even should he comprehend it, and hear the doctrines of the school-room controverted, he would be apt to satisfy himself in the conclusion, that his teacher was the oracle after all. The pulpit-minister is to him a comparative stranger; he is the man in black whom he holds in mysterious awe; he does not know him as a private friend, an affectionate adviser; and he always associates him with the desk and the rites of the sanctuary, as a personage who is not to be thought of in any other connexion. Thus the mind is preoccupied, and thus it will grow up and strengthen, and take its character from the inflection the teacher has given it, whatever that character be. If there be a variance with the opinions of the minister, there must be a

contest with the prejudices thus instilled that will make a change of views at least difficult and perplexing. But it is more probable that it will result in dissatisfaction, or confusion, if not in an entire theological revolution in the character of the Church. For such an issue the ministry should be held in a great degree responsible, if they have thus permitted a whole generation to go through a course of indoctrination from year to year, without inquiry or interference on their part.

It will certainly be admitted that such an issue is possible, where there is no pastoral supervision, and that the Church may thus be said to be in the hands of Sunday school teachers. Let the constituted guardians of its peace and purity, then, see that they are not cherishing an infant Hercules for its own subversion. The surest way of guarding against all such possible evils is, that the teachers should feel that they are recognized as co-pastors, and that they are held by some responsibility to the Church of Christ. A minister may, by the indifference he manifests to the state of his schools, the formality of his visits to them, and the avoidance of all intercourse or pastoral duty with the teachers as such, so effectually repel them as to be considered to have refused their control. Left in this way to their own course, discouraged from going to their natural adviser, they are compelled to be their own guides, and to go on in their labours unnoticed and forgotten, excepting perhaps, to be classed in an occasional paragraph of prayer with the 'ancient covenant people,' Ethiopia, and other expletory topics.

An inversion of this would, of course, insure an auxiliary in his functions whose efficiency will tend more to lighten his burthen, and promote his success, than many clerical colleagues. By devoting a regular service to the instruction and advice of teachers; by mingling so much with the business of the school as to have his connexion with it felt, without involving him in the peculiar duties of the teachers; by combining it as an integral portion of the general interests of the Church; by keeping parents in a right estimation of its privileges, and their corresponding duties; by connecting it in prayer, and preaching, and pastoral visitation with the most prominent means of promoting religion; by all such methods as he employs in impelling his people to duty, he may and should elevate in their consideration the system of youthful religious education. The ministry is the proper source of

knowledge to which teachers look. If their views of truth are to be clarified, established, and made consistent, it is the province of the ministry to do it. To qualify them properly for their station, something more than the proficiency of catechumens is necessary. Some intellectual discipline is required to prepare them for a systematic study of truth; and they need habits of regular thought and judgment. These may or may not have been parts of their education, but they should be applied to religious investigations with skilfulness. The minds of the children, too, will claim their study, if they hope to mould them, and prepare them for substantial exercise. Children should be guided in the art of thinking, as well as supplied with subjects of thinking; and that scholar will, through the grace of God, be the most intelligent, stable, and useful Christian, whose mind was disciplined whilst his soul was subdued. There is now also great need of biblical knowledge of all kinds amongst teachers. They should be well furnished with the variety of information necessary for the exposition of the Scriptures: yet out of the clerical order how few have taken any pains to study their chronology, geography, antiquities, and evidences? They need too, no small imbuing in polemic theology to meet the inquiries and remarks which are constantly presented by intelligent scholars. Every instance of doubt or ignorance on a doctrinal, casuistical, or historical question, makes an impression of incompetency very prejudicial to the influence of the person thus found at fault. Children assume that one who undertakes to teach, virtually professes to know, and they are quick at detecting deficiencies. Yet their speculations are usually within a compass that something less than a Doctor of theology can satisfy; and a wise minister can easily prepare his teachers for such emergencies. This whole duty, of biblical instruction, however, pertains directly to the ordinary functions of a minister, and he would do well to keep all his congregation qualified to explain the literature of the Bible, as well as intelligently and scripturally to give a reason of the spiritual hope they profess to indulge.

Without some uniform plan of study on these topics, there may be a very unfortunate diversity of explanations in the same school. Each may have 'a doctrine, a revelation, an interpretation,' of his own, if the results of longer study are not furnished by the minister and adopted by his agents. Besides, his course of reading enables him to gather all ac-



cessible information, and he may communicate it with more ease and advantage than it could be derived by the consultation of original sources of knowledge. It is the best expedient a minister could adopt of refreshing his memory with his early theological and biblical studies, to give his teachers, if not his whole congregation, an introduction to the learning connected with a full understanding of the Bible. He may, at least, be always ready to refer the studious to authentic sources of instruction, and furnish every facility to enable them to make their own acquisitions.

An intimacy with the school also commends itself to a minister as creating a new tie between him and his people. It connects him with the teachers and learners, in a manner which greatly strengthens the affection and promotes the influence of their mutual relation. The indication of an active interest on his part in their plans, has a natural tendency to persuade them of his earnestness in the service of the Redeemer. His countenance and assistance encourage them in their labours, and an assurance of his sympathy relieves them amidst many trials of faith and patience. The members of the classes are more deeply impressed with the importance of their privileges, when they see their clergyman putting a high estimate upon them. The same remark may be applied to the Church at large, and children will be likely to undervalue the institution when they see Christians, both minister and people, keeping aloof from them, or viewing them occasionally, as they do a curious exhibition. No set rules are desirable to regulate the manner in which the proper interest should be manifested. We know that there are some ceremonious assemblings of the schools in presence of the congregation; that a church-member sometimes accidentally strays into the school-room; and sometimes a regular delegation makes a perfunctory progress through the apartments. Even these cold recognitions are better than total neglect; but let Christians determine the value of the institution as a means of glorifying God; let them pray for it with the energy that a conviction of its true nature would inspire; and then shall they find appropriate methods of efficient patronage: then shall be seen more enduring and extensive results than the amplest pecuniary endowment can buy. The minister must guide the faith and charity of his people into this channel. His mere declamatory sanction will avail little; but let him be seen as an active member of the organization; let not

only his prayers and sermons, but his whole pastorship, testify that the Sunday School is, in his estimation, a concern of the Church, and the Church will be led to their duty. Parents will not be brought in any other way so strongly to realize their obligations, and to feel the magnitude of the results dependent on the manner in which their children are instructed.

But besides the duty of carrying it into immediate effect, there is much required of the Church in perfecting the system itself. For the former services, we need the heart and hand; in this, the efforts of the Christian *mind* are most particularly required. The whole scheme of religious education needs improvement. The minds of children have never been sufficiently studied, so as to facilitate the adaptation of a system of teaching to the moral and intellectual diversity which characterizes the juvenile mind. Christian philosophers are needed to trace the principles of reason from the most plastic stage of their germination through all their development. Men are needed to take advantage of the results of such observation, to suggest the proper modes of applying instruction to the respective cases. This would open the whole science of efficient teaching. Sound minds are wanted to prepare books on these principles for the use of children, fitted not only to their comprehension, but to their reason, judgment, and conscience. The importance of the agency of the Sunday School library can hardly be spoken of in extravagant terms. It is enough to say, that an opportunity is offered by it of supplying the daily reading of the six hundred thousand pupils connected with the schools in this country, and of every family to which these pupils are attached. It is not, therefore, sufficient to furnish books of innocent amusement to keep improper publications out of their hands. There should be books for their study; elementary works in all the departments of useful learning and information, books that should invite the exercise of thought, and lead to a standard of correct moral judgment. A large field for this kind of labour is still open in the science of biblical elucidation. The histories and characters of the Bible are themes which might well attract the attention of pious authors. There is no way so effectual of recommending the revealed word as by showing its excellencies and beauties distinctively, in the separate condensation of its endless topics of usefulness. Children are in this manner more sensibly impressed with the reality and force of the incidents and morals of the Bible, than

by being confined to the text of our version. Every illustration of its geography, civil and natural history, and antiquities, is a cause of attraction to the volume itself; and no class of publications is so favourite with ingenuous children as those devoted to its simplification and elucidation. There is scarcely any species of useful literature which may not be accommodated to the taste and capacity of children and youth, and, at the same time, be profitable to a very large class of adults. The whole range of moral biography, especially, should be reduced to this service; for, on no minds is example more potent in its impressions. How vast would be the moral effect of bringing up children to read all history with reference to the providence of God! If Christian historians have so long confined their ambition to the bare chronicling of facts, and seen no other than their political and philosophical connexions, it is time that our children should be taught to read on better principles.

The next generation of teachers will be principally composed of the present scholars; and this fact increases their claim for adequate preparation at our hands. Such have been the deficiencies or trammels of the early religious nurture of most of us, that we go to the duty of teaching comparatively awkward. Our scholars, on the contrary, will have the advantage of teaching to children what they have learned as children; and when this is effected, the success of the system will be increased in a manifold degree. To us, however, it falls to be the pioneers, and on our age it is incumbent to furnish the ablest agents for a new era in the enterprise. These are offices for the pious and intelligent in the Church. The late accessions to it from the ranks of intellectual men is unprecedented, and we would earnestly direct their faculties to a work which is not unworthy of their powers. There are men of this class who could give a more decisive impulse to the cause of Christianity, by bending their minds to the promotion of religious education by such means as we have designated, than by entering the ministry, or devoting their time to oral teaching in Sunday Schools. The employment of a few leisure hours might result in modifying the reading of multitudes of the three millions of children in the nation. Can a brighter and more enduring laurel be held up than would be accorded to success in this field? Can the men, advanced in life, and full of honours, who have at last yielded to the claims of God, better redeem the scores of years they

have lost, than by concentrating their force upon a measure which may place the interests of religion many years in advance of its ordinary progression? There are also many other persons in the Church who could readily contribute to this cause. The ministry, and men of talent in other professions, would consult their own religious improvement, and be acting an important part in the moral enterprise of the day by making their intellectual resources contribute to the advancement of Christian education. Female talent is peculiarly fitted for this service; and at this day a fairer opportunity is afforded them of obeying the apostle's exhortation to be *καλοδιδασκαλος*, "teachers of good things," than they have enjoyed since he intimated it to Titus.

In the view of the present condition of this cause, there is, surely, reason to fear that its pretensions have been overlooked. It is a great scheme of domestic missionary enterprise, and is the conservative of all the other branches of evangelical effort. Establish schools in every church for the religious education of all classes, from infancy to old age; make every qualified member an agent in some department of the operations, and a large number of ministers will be raised up for the service of Pagan nations. Form a great Christian bond of fellowship to unite the various sections of the Church in holy concord and combination, and every teacher and thousands of scholars will be gratuitous agents for the dissemination of the Bible and of tracts. On this ground the hostilities of sectarism may be slain, and the universal Church ally for Christ and for the cross. "No such singular conjuncture of symptoms throughout the world, has ever before invited the activity and zeal of Christians. And if the pressure of responsibility is at all times great upon them, in this behalf, it has acquired now a treble weight; inasmuch as it seems as if the antagonist powers were fast drawing off from the field. Looking out to the long and many-coloured array of ghostly domination, as it stretches its lines across plains and hills, we discern movement; but it is the stir of retreat. Encampments are breaking up; barriers are trampled upon; standards are furled; the clarion of dismay is sounded. This—this then, is the hour for the hosts of the Lord to snatch their weapons and be up!"\*

\* 'Saturday Evening.' Art. ii.

ART. V.—*Essays on the Formation and Publication of Opinions, and on other subjects. From the last London edition. Philadelphia. R. W. Pomeroy. A. Waldie, printer, 1831.*

*Essays on the Pursuit of Truth, on the Progress of Knowledge, and the Fundamental Principles of all Evidence and Expectation. By the author of Essays on the Formation and Publication of Opinions. Philadelphia. R. W. Pomeroy. A. Waldie, printer, 1831.*

THE ESSAYS, of which we have here given the titles, have attracted no small degree of attention in Great Britain, and are, doubtless, the production of a mind of high cultivation, and extraordinary refinement. There is manifested in every part of the work a liberal and independent spirit; a love of truth which disdains to be trammelled; a metaphysical acumen which penetrates the abstrusest subjects; and a nice moral discrimination, indicating a long and familiar acquaintance with the science of ethics. We have seldom encountered an author for whose abilities we have been constrained to feel a higher respect; and we are of opinion that he will gain an unusual ascendancy over the judgment of his readers, generally. We were led to entertain this high estimation of the talent with which these Essays were written, before we noticed the exalted eulogy of the Westminster Review, on the first of these volumes. The language of the Reviewer is, "If a man could be offered the paternity of any modern book that he chose, he would not hazard much by deciding, that next after the 'Wealth of Nations,' he would request to be honoured with a relationship to the 'Essays on the Formation and Publication of Opinions.' And again, "It would have been an honourable and pleasant memory to have written a book so *totus teres atque rotundus*, so finished in its parts, and so perfect in their union, as, 'Essays on the Formation of Opinions,' &c. Like one of the great statues of antiquity, it might have been broken into fragments, and each separated limb would have pointed to the existence of some interesting whole, of which the value might be surmised from the beauty of the specimen." By most, perhaps, this praise will be thought somewhat extravagant,



but after making all due allowance, there will be much remaining in the *Essays* of this anonymous author, which cannot be easily rivalled.

Upon the publication of the second edition of the "*Essays, on the Formation and Publication of Opinions,*" we find it noticed in the same Review, but probably by a different critic, in the following manner, "It gives us no ordinary pleasure to find that a second edition has been called for of this very useful volume. It is one of the signs of the times.....The design is excellent, and the execution more than creditable. A popular manner has been studied by the writer, and with success. The train of thought is simple, without being superficial, and is followed at once with ease and with interest." The principal topics which are treated in these volumes are, the utility of the knowledge of truth, and its invariable connexion with happiness—the importance of cherishing a sincere love of truth, fearless of consequences—the independence of our belief on the will—the sources of diversity of opinion among men—Belief, or opinion, whether properly an object of moral approbation and disapprobation—of rewards and punishments. Besides these principal topics, there are several short essays on subjects of minor importance. In the second volume, the author resumes and pursues his favourite subject; the importance of truth—the obstacles which stand in the way of impartial investigation—the duty of inquiry—the free publication of opinions—the progress of knowledge,—and the uniformity of causation. On the *Essay, on the last subject here mentioned*, there is an able article in the number of the *Edinburgh Review*, for January, 1831, in which, the correctness of the author's principle, as it relates to miracles, is successfully controverted.

It is not our object to enter into a discussion of all the principles and points brought into view in these ingenious *Essays*; but to confine ourselves to two inquiries, of great moral and practical importance. The first is, *the responsibility of man for his belief or opinions*; the second, *whether any testimony is sufficient to establish a fact which is a departure from the laws of nature.*

The ground assumed and ingeniously defended by our author, will be best understood by a few brief extracts from the seventh section of his "*Essay on the Formation of Opinions.*" p. 57.

“By the universal consent of the reason and feelings of mankind, what is involuntary, cannot involve any merit or demerit on the part of the agent. Results which are not the consequences of volition, cannot be the proper objects of moral praise and blame. . . . . It follows, that those states of the understanding which we term belief, doubt, and disbelief, inasmuch as they are not voluntary, nor the result of any exertion of the will, imply neither merit nor demerit in him who is the subject of them. Whatever be the state of a man’s understanding in relation to any possible proposition, it is a state or affection devoid equally of desert and culpability. The nature of an opinion cannot make it criminal. In relation to the same subject, one may believe, another may doubt, and a third disbelieve, and all with equal innocence.

“There may, it is true, be considerable merit or demerit attached to the manner in which an inquiry is prosecuted. The labour and research which a man bestows, in order to determine any important question, and the impartiality with which he conducts the examination, may be entitled to our warmest applause. On the other hand, it is reprehensible for any one to be swayed in his conduct by interest or passion, to reject opportunities of information, to be designedly partial in examining evidence, to be deaf to whatever is offered on one side of a question, and lend all his attention to the other. . . . .

“No one, perhaps, will dispute, that when a man acts without intentional partiality in the examination of a question, he cannot be at all culpable for the effect which follows, whether the research terminate in faith or incredulity; because it is the necessary and involuntary consequence of the views presented to his understanding, without the slightest interference of choice: but, it will probably be alleged, that in so far as belief, doubt, and disbelief, have been the result of wilful partiality of attention, they may be regarded with propriety as culpable, since it is common to blame a man for those things, which, although involuntary in themselves, are the result of voluntary acts. To this it may be replied, that it is, to say the least, a want of precision to apply blame in such a manner: it is always more correct to regard men as culpable on account of their voluntary acts, than on account of the results over which volition has no immediate control. There would, nevertheless, be little objection to considering opinions as reprehensible, in so far as they were the result of unfair investigation, if it could be rendered a useful or practical principle. In all cases where we make involuntary effects the objects of moral reprehension, it is because they are certain proofs or positive indications of the voluntary acts which preceded them.

Opinions, however, are not effects of this kind: they are not positive indications of any voluntary acts: they furnish no criterions of the fairness or unfairness of investigation, since the most opposite results, the most contrary opinions, may ensue from the same degree of impartiality and application. . . . Belief, doubt, and disbelief, therefore, can never, even in the character of indications of antecedent voluntary acts, be the proper objects of moral reprehension or commendation."

From these quotations, the opinions of the author will be readily understood: it will be seen that in no case can we be praiseworthy or culpable, on account of the opinions which we form. And in these sentiments he is by no means singular; several of the most distinguished men, in Great Britain have publicly avowed the same. We refer particularly to the Lord Chancellor of England, and the late Sir James M'Intosh; and as far as the Westminster Review may be considered an index of public sentiment, this opinion seems to have taken firm possession of a considerable portion of the reading population of Great Britain.

The author of these Essays, however, seems to be sensible that he is opposing what has been the generally received opinion. He takes pains to account for the prevalence of a sentiment opposite to that for which he pleads. And, indeed, the fact cannot be denied, that, in all countries where ethics have been an object of attention, it has been held as an axiom, that men were responsible for their belief and opinions, in certain cases. So far as men have been agreed on this point, there is a presumption that there exists, in reason and nature, some solid foundation for the opinion. But as there seems to be room for some diversity of opinion on this subject; and as the commonly received opinion has been called in question by men of great name and sagacity; it is possible that the world may have been, until this time, in an error. Until, however, this is clearly demonstrated, the presumption remains in favour of the old opinion. But omitting all appeals to the common consent of mankind, let us come directly to the discussion of the point itself.

The first thought which strikes us in meditating on this subject, is, that if men are in no case responsible for their belief or opinions, then there is no such thing as moral responsibility. If men's opinions are in no case proper objects of moral approbation or disapprobation, their actions, which

depend for their character on their opinions, cannot be reprehensible. It cannot be morally wrong to act in accordance with an innocent opinion. If there is no culpability in a man's believing that he may take away the life of an old miser, there cannot be any criminality in his doing the deed, which he has persuaded himself is innocent. Thus, this doctrine leads to the subversion of all moral distinctions.

But the ingenious author admits, and strenuously maintains, that man is responsible for his volitions, as the universal opinion of men ever has been that for our voluntary states of mind we are accountable. Yet it is difficult to understand how my volitions can be wrong, when the opinions on which they often absolutely depend, are free from all blame. Suppose a man to be fully persuaded in his mind, that private property was an unauthorized invasion of the common rights of mankind; if he might entertain this opinion with perfect innocence, how could it be wrong to act agreeably to this persuasion, and to appropriate to his own use the property of another? If, while the opinion is innocent, the action which accords with it is immoral, then, the consequence would follow, that a man might not do what he innocently believes is right.

It is impossible to separate voluntary actions from belief or opinions; if the former are culpable, so are the latter, on which they depend for their character. Voluntary action owes its moral quality to the motive by which it is prompted. If the motive be pure and good, the volition is so also; and if the motive be evil, so is the voluntary action. Separate the volition from the motive which produces it, and you destroy the moral character of the action. A man resolves to kill his neighbour. This purpose is a voluntary state of the mind, and is wicked; but why? because it is prompted by a malignant feeling; but suppose that this purpose was produced by nothing else but the desire of self-preservation, or the desire to protect the innocent from lawless violence; who does not see that the same volition may be good or bad, according to the motive by which it is produced? Well, if the volition receives its complexion from the motive or affection producing it, then certainly praise or blame attaches to motives, as much as to volitions. But these internal motives or affections depend for their existence and character, on the opinions which have obtained a firm hold of the mind. The malignant feeling which produces the purpose to kill a man, is the

effect of an erroneous persuasion or opinion. As, suppose I have through prejudice taken up the opinion, that some man is the enemy of God, and a great obstacle to the progress of his Church, and that by putting him out of the way, I should be doing service to God and the public; is it not manifest, that if there be responsibility any where, opinion or belief must come in for its share, since this is the true origin of the culpable action? But if the opinion is innocent, so is the feeling which flows from it; so is the volition prompted by this motive; and so is the action which is the result of the voluntary purpose. Hence it is evident, that the consequence of this doctrine is the subversion of all distinction between right and wrong; between virtue and vice.

The ingenious author admits that opinion is, sometimes, the effect of voluntary states of the mind, and, on that account, it has become often the object of moral approbation or disapprobation; but this, he thinks, is not exactly correct, but is transferring the moral character of the action, from the volition to which it properly belongs, to the belief or opinion, to which it does not appertain. But even admitting the propriety of considering that which is the criterion of the moral character of our volitions as the proper object of praise or blame, he does not think that our belief or opinions would, even in this case, be the proper object of condemnation or approbation: "Opinions," says he, "are not indications of any voluntary acts; they furnish no evidence of the fairness or unfairness of investigation; since the most opposite results, the most contrary opinions, may arise from the same degree of impartiality and application." Here, in our opinion, is the radical error of the moral system of the ingenious author of these Essays. He seems to receive it as a principle, that, in no case, where there is diversity of opinion, the evidence of truth is so clear, that none can or do mistake respecting it, except through prejudice, inattention, or some want of fidelity and impartiality, in the mind of him who falls into error. There may, indeed, be truths, and truths of a moral nature too, so situated as to evidence, in relation to the minds of different persons, that in the exercise of equal diligence and impartiality, men may come to opposite results, or embrace different opinions; but that this is generally the case, we hold to be a practical error of great magnitude. If this were indeed the fact, then the pursuit of truth would be nugatory; then there could be no duty incumbent on any man



in regard to it; because, however honest, diligent, and impartial the person might be, there would exist just the same probability of arriving at an erroneous, as a true opinion. Upon this principle, the high moral obligation of searching after truth, on which this writer so forcibly and frequently insists, is utterly subverted; for when men have no probability of finding truth rather than error, there is no moral obligation to pursue it. And this involves the very absurd opinion, that, generally, truth is accompanied with no better nor clearer evidence, than error. Now, if there be such a thing as truth, its characteristic must be, that it possesses evidence of being truth; and error is destitute of the evidence of truth. We have admitted, indeed, that relatively to the situation of particular minds, the evidence of truth may be so concealed or involved, that it is not perceived; and error, in such cases, may seem to be more probable than truth, even when there is a sincere desire to come at the truth; and these we are willing to consider as exceptions to the general rule. But, commonly, the evidence of truths which have any relation to moral conduct, is sufficiently within the reach of the honest inquirer; and if he adopts error, the reason must be, because he has been wanting in diligence, attention, or impartiality. He is, therefore, in all such cases responsible for his belief, as much as he can be for any thing; and if this is not, in any case, a proper object of moral approbation or condemnation, then, as was before shown, nothing is. For, as to the true point on which moral responsibility rests, we cannot but think, that the author enters into unnecessary refinement. Indeed, it is not correct that volition, taken in philosophic strictness, is the sole object of our moral approbation or disapprobation. We have already seen, that the moral character of the volition depends on the motive, and the internal motive or affection which prompts to volition gives it its moral character; and the nature of such an affection in a rational, accountable creature, is intimately and inseparably connected with belief or opinion. When men exercise their moral faculty in judging of the moral character of actions, they never enter into these nice distinctions. They take the action with all the preceding and accompanying circumstances, and form a correct opinion, without metaphysical discrimination. Thus, an immoral action, if you separate it from the volition which produced it, has no moral character; and the volition, considered separately from the quality of the motive, is no object of praise or blame; and the motive could not be what it is, unless the

person entertained certain opinions; and the truth or falsehood of these opinions depends on the diligence and fidelity with which the great duty of forming opinions was performed. Now, in regard to all these consecutive acts, the agent is responsible; and it is not correct to confine his moral responsibility solely to the volition; or to the action; or to the motive; or to the forming of his opinions; but we take the whole together, as combining to form one moral act; and all further refinement only serves to bewilder the mind, and to render obscure and doubtful, that which otherwise would be perfectly evident.

To show the inconsistency of this opinion with the author's belief of the duty of impartially searching after truth, we will suppose the case of a man's entertaining the opinion, that there is no such thing as truth; or that the knowledge of truth is unattainable by us; or, that it is of no importance, for it matters not what we believe. Now this is a very supposable case, for all these opinions have been held by one and another. Then, we ask, what becomes of the obligation of these persons to inquire after the truth? They, according to the principle which we are considering, are in no respect responsible for their opinions; they cannot be considered as culpable for their belief or opinions. If then they may innocently entertain these opinions, there can be no moral obligation on them to act contrary to their own belief. This would be the greatest of moral absurdities. It appears, therefore, that this writer is not consistent with himself, in insisting on the obligation, which all men are under to search diligently and impartially after the truth; and yet maintaining that men are, in no case, responsible for their opinions. The tendency of this doctrine, therefore, is to subvert all moral obligation of every kind; and also to render the pursuit of truth itself useless.

In all cases of this kind, the decision must be in accordance with the common judgment of men. To the moral sense of the human race, and not to the refined and metaphysical reasoning of philosophers, must the appeal be ultimately made. And to this tribunal we are willing to bring the cause, and are persuaded that the decision will not be ambiguous, or unfavourable to our opinion. Men have existed, who were firmly persuaded that it was right for them to take away the lives of others. Under the influence of superstition and fanaticism, the opinion has not only been entertained, but the fact has been perpetrated. Ravallac, for example, when he

assassinated Henry IV. of France, was fully persuaded that he was doing God service. Those parents, who, under the influence of a cruel superstition, offer up to their idols their own children, are certainly persuaded that they are performing a good action; for nothing but such a persuasion could overcome their natural affection. Most persecutors of others, on account of their religious belief, are of opinion that they ought to inflict such punishments on heretics. No doubt, many thieves and robbers have persuaded themselves, that every man has a right to whatever he needs, in the possession of whomsoever it may be found. Under the influence of cupidity, a murderer adopts the opinion, that there can be no harm in taking away the life of a decrepit old miser, or some rich old woman, as by this means, the wealth which they have neither the will nor capacity to enjoy, will be thrown into circulation, and will contribute to the happiness of multitudes. Is there no moral evil attached to such opinions? The voice of mankind says there is; but by philosophy, it seems, the discovery has been made, that the world has ever been labouring under a grievous mistake, in relation to this matter. We are now informed, from high authority, that belief or opinion is no proper object of censure or approbation. Opinions, it is said, do not depend on volition, and men ought not to be held responsible for them. And Sir James Mackintosh is of opinion, that the evils of controversy and persecution can never be eradicated until this principle is established among men. But we trust, it has been made manifest to the reader, that the universal reception of this doctrine would sanction every kind of persecution, and would open the flood-gates to every species of vice—murder and robbery not excepted. This, indeed, must be the inevitable consequence, unless it can be demonstrated, that such opinions as those mentioned above, never have been, nor can be entertained by any man: or, that men may be guilty for willing and acting, in exact accordance with their own opinions. But certainly, men are capable under the influence of wicked motives, of adopting, and confidently entertaining opinions at war with every valuable institution and relation in life. And we are sure, that if it is once received as a maxim that there is no guilt in entertaining such opinions, men will not be restrained from perpetrating the most horrid crimes, and that without the fear of remorse.

In this case we see the verification of the common proverb, that "extremes meet." The very evils which have arisen

from holding, that one man is responsible for all his opinions to his fellow men, who happen to be in authority, will be produced in a form still more terrific from this opposite doctrine, that man is not morally responsible for any of his opinions; not even to his Creator. For as the first has led to innumerable persecutions; so, the latter will sanction persecution of every kind, if only the persecutor can be of opinion, that he is doing right. The Inquisitors may, upon this principle, resume their labours; for although, it is true, that the victims of their fanatic rage, ought not to be molested for their opinions; yet, if they entertain the belief that they may be tortured, hanged, or burned, there is nothing morally wrong in this opinion; and if the opinion is not wrong, it is irrational to suppose, that merely acting in accordance with an innocent opinion, can be morally wrong.

The Westminster Reviewer, who entirely concurs in the opinion of our author, makes the same distinction between holding an opinion, and attending to, or, as he expresses it, "dealing with evidence:" and Dr. Wardlaw is greatly ridiculed for his dissent from the opinions of Mr. Brougham, delivered in his speech when he was inaugurated as the Rector of the University of Glasgow. Dr. Wardlaw, however, is no more to be blamed for his opinions, however bigoted they may be, than any other man. It would seem, from the manner in which he is treated by the reviewer, that there exists an implied exception from the general rule, in regard to clergymen, for which profession he manifests no great respect. But our only reason for referring to this Review is, to make a remark on the manner in which it treats the argument of Dr. Wardlaw, derived from the fact, that according to the sacred Scriptures, not only is man responsible for his belief, but every thing is made to depend on faith. Now it would have been honest in this writer to deny the authority of the Bible, as it is evident he does in heart: but, no—this course would not answer. He did not wish to encounter the obloquy to which an open profession of infidelity might expose him. He, therefore, proceeds upon the supposition, that the Scriptures are of authority, and attacks Dr. Wardlaw in the following remarkable manner:

"Dr. Wardlaw is prodigiously in earnest to convince the world, that the Scripture attaches the greatest merit to faith, and the greatest demerit to the want of it. We knew not that so much

effort on this subject was necessary; but be that as it may, this at least is certain, that the Scripture can inculcate nothing that is absurd in point of reason, or mischievous in point of morality. We have seen, that it would be absurd in point of reason, and mischievous in point of morality, to ascribe merit or demerit to belief. This, therefore, is what the Scriptures cannot do. We have seen that it is most true in point of reason, and sound in point of morality, to ascribe merit and demerit, even the highest, to the proper and improper modes of dealing with evidence. The man who deals properly with evidence, is the man who has faith; the man who deals improperly with it, is the man who is without faith. Now it is possible, though not very common, for a man to deal faithfully with evidence and yet to come to the wrong conclusion. It is also very possible, and unhappily very common, that a man who has never given himself any concern about evidence—should hold the right opinion. Notwithstanding this, the former is the man who has the merit of dealing virtuously, the latter is the man who has the demerit of dealing wickedly, with evidence. Here the man who has the wrong opinion, is the man who has faith, according to the Scriptures: the man who has the right opinion is the man who, be the opinion what it may, is destitute of faith. Faith, in short has nothing to do with creeds. Of two men, the one even an atheist, the other a sound believer, it may be that the atheist is the man who has faith according to the Scripture: and that the sound believer is the man who is destitute of faith, according to the Scripture; that the atheist is possessed of all the merit, the sound believer of all the demerit, which the Scripture ascribes to the possession or want of this saving grace. As we have shown, that, of all classes of men, the clergy, as a class, are the most constant and the deepest offenders against the virtue of dealing rightly with evidence, it follows, that of all classes of men living, the clergy are the most remarkably destitute of faith; in other words, are, of all men living, the greatest of infidels.”\*

This passage has been cited, not for the purpose of animadverting on it, much less of refuting it; but to show to what lengths of extravagance men will go, in defence of a favourite opinion; and also as a curiosity in theological reasoning. It may be, then, that the world has been hitherto entirely mistaken in considering atheists, unbelievers; for we are here taught that they may possess the saving grace of faith, in great perfection, although they believe not one word in the Bible, nor even that there is a God. And as for the clergy—here the venom of the writers’ spirit is exhibited—they are

\* Westminster Review, No. xi. p. 20. 21.



not merely may be, but are, as was before demonstrated, believe what they may, and sincerely as they may, the greatest infidels in the world. We Americans are certainly far behind our transatlantic brethren of the quill, in the liberality of our opinions. Such profound reasoning as is here given, would not only not be admired, but not even understood by our most intelligent readers.

The true doctrine, as it appears to us, in relation to man's responsibility for his belief, may be summed up in the following particulars :

1. Those truths which are self-evident, or the proof of which is demonstrative and perfectly clear, are believed by necessity; that is, the constitution of our minds is such, that we cannot do otherwise than believe them. We cannot disbelieve them by any effort. In regard to such truths as these, there can be no merit in believing, nor is there any moral quality in assent thus given.

2. There are other truths, the evidence of which is not so obvious and convincing as to place them beyond the reach of doubt or contradiction: and yet these having no relation to duty, men may differ about them, and be equally innocent. In such a case, our opinions are not the proper objects of moral approbation or disapprobation.

3. There may be truths which have an important relation to human duty, which, however, are so situated as to evidence, in relation to some persons, that, although they may be diligent and honest in the search of truth, they may not be able to discern them. As, for example, if a man in the centre of China or Thibet, who had never heard of the Bible, should be sincerely desirous to know whether the great Creator had ever made any revelation of his will to men, he might not be able, by all the industry which he could use, and all the inquiries he could make, to satisfy himself on this important point. But supposing this to be the state of the facts, it is evident that his doubt, or disbelief, although inconsistent with the truth, would be no object of moral disapprobation.

4. Again, there is a large class of practical truths, so situated as to evidence, that the knowledge of them is fairly attainable by the diligent and impartial inquirer; while they will be almost certainly hid from the view of men who are strongly under the influence of pride, avarice, or the predominant love of pleasure. In regard to this whole class—

and it is a numerous one—men are responsible for their erroneous belief, if they are for any thing.

This opinion is not founded on any speculative reasoning; it is the dictate of common sense; and is confirmed by the judgment of unprejudiced men in every age and every country, where the inhabitants are capable of forming an opinion on such subjects. How does it come to pass that all men are so prone to form opinions favourable to their own interests? Are they not swayed by an inordinate self-love? Are not opinions formed under the influence of such feelings wrong? When a man judges that, in a certain controversy, his neighbour has injured him, or is indebted to him, while impartial spectators declare the contrary to be the fact, is there no evil in these selfish opinions? A man has it in his power to relieve a number of suffering poor; but having long indulged and pampered his avarice, under the influence of this sordid passion, he has persuaded himself, that he is under no obligation to help the poor; that charity of this kind only tends to foster indolence and improvidence. Is there no demerit in such opinions, thus contracted? Suppose a man to have taken offence at another, because his pride was not regarded and gratified; and suppose, that through resentment and malevolence, he ascribes the most virtuous conduct of his neighbour to the basest and most sinister motives, is there no moral obliquity in such opinions? But, I need not pursue this topic; the truth is too evident to require any further illustration. It may, however, be proper before we dismiss the subject, to state a case, which is, probably, the very one that has given rise to all these speculations about men's irresponsibility for their belief and opinions. We will suppose that God has given a revelation to man, which contains many truths offensive to the pride, and disgusting to the taste of certain learned philosophers: the consequence is, that they refuse to give the evidences of this revelation a careful and impartial examination. Or, depending on their own reason as a sufficient guide, they adopt certain opinions and maxims which are repugnant to the truths and principles of revelation; and thus, undertaking to bring these truths to the test of their own reason, they proudly reject them: concluding, that God never could have made such a communication to men. And, upon the same principles, they might adopt the opinion that God never made such a world as this, in which we live; for the analogy between the Bible and crea-

tion is remarkably close. These philosophic men having come to a conclusion, unfavourable to the claims of Christianity, the religion of the country where they dwell, feel that they are, in consequence of their free opinions, subjected to a certain degree of obloquy, as unbelievers: they therefore labour to remove all ground of reproach, by maintaining that, in no case, is any man responsible for his belief or opinions. But they gain very little by this principle, if it should be conceded to them; for, they admit, that every man is deeply responsible for the manner in which he deals with evidence; or for the sincerity, diligence, and impartiality, with which he examines into the evidence of truth. It matters not whether censure falls upon a man for holding a particular opinion, or for the corrupt feelings which led him to adopt it; the consequences will be precisely the same, as it relates to public opinion, in relation to the character of the individual. The man who has arrived at false opinions by unfaithful dealing with evidence, is just as guilty, and will be as justly condemned, as if our moral disapprobation was confined to the act of assent, by which he adopts certain opinions of his own.

It does not appear to us, therefore, that any thing is gained by the new theory of ethics, in preventing censure or persecution, for the sake of difference in opinion. It might, upon the same principles, and with just as much plausibility, be argued, that no external actions were proper objects of approbation or condemnation; since, considered separately from the motives producing them, actions can possess no moral quality. But, if it is at the same time admitted, that men are accountable for the motives from which their actions proceed, it amounts to the same thing as if the moral quality attached to the action. Just so in regard to belief or opinion, however it may be represented as no proper object of moral consideration; yet, if the state of mind from which it results, is moral, it comes in the end to the very same thing. Indeed, both as it relates to opinions and actions, when we speak of them as censurable or commendable, we include the motive or disposition from which the action or opinion flows. If a man believes his neighbour to be a vile hypocrite, and ascribes all his most virtuous actions to base motives, not because there is any good evidence that this is the fact, but because he has long cherished hatred towards him, in the view of every impartial mind he is criminal for the uncharitable opinion which he entertains. This must be acknow-

ledged, or all idea of moral obligation, and of a difference between virtue and vice, must be relinquished.

And, finally, this theory destroys itself; for if a man be responsible for none of his opinions, then he is not responsible for believing that men are responsible for their opinions. Be it an error; yet, no man is culpable merely for entertaining an erroneous opinion. We may, therefore, innocently believe that the opinions of men are proper objects of moral approbation or condemnation. Thus we arrive at the very point which these philosophers have so assiduously endeavoured to avoid. Nor can this consequence be evaded by resorting to the principle, that we are accountable for the impartiality and diligence with which we form our opinions, on important practical subjects; for, if we entertain the opinion that truth is unimportant or unattainable, there can exist no moral obligation on us, to use diligence or exercise impartiality, in its investigation.

We are fully persuaded, therefore, that no principle more hostile to the best interests of truth and sound morality, has been for a long time inculcated; and coming from men whose opinions have acquired so great influence with the intelligent public, and being defended by writers of so much apparent candor and philosophical acumen, as the author of these *Essays*, there is just cause for alarm to the friends of morality; to say nothing of the bearing of these doctrines, on divine revelation. And what adds to the danger is, that the poison is so subtle that few readers perceive it, until they have imbibed the deleterious potion. We are persuaded, that the publishers and venders of these "*Essays*" in this country, had no idea that they were putting principles into circulation, the tendency of which is to subvert all sound morality.

The remaining principle which we propose to examine, is not less important, than that already considered. It is, "whether any kind or degree of testimony is sufficient to establish a fact which is a deviation from the known laws of nature?" This subject is treated, in the second of the little volumes, which stand at the head of this article. The *Essay* in which it is discussed, is entitled, "*The uniformity of causation explaining the fundamental principle of all evidence and expectation.*"

The ingenious author commences his *Essay*, by laying down the necessity of admitting some truths which do not depend for their proof on logical deduction. In this he agrees with

all modern philosophers of any note; and the thing is too evident to be doubted or denied. He next proceeds to state, the manner in which our belief in the uniformity of causation is obtained. When we have become acquainted, by observation, with the operation of any natural causes, we cannot avoid the belief, that these causes, in similar circumstances, will produce the same effects. Our author informs us, "that Mr. Hume was the first who distinctly showed that the uniformity of causation was not an inference from any other truth; that it was not a logical consequence of any principle or proposition previously admitted; that in applying the past to the future there was a step taken by the mind which required explanation." We feel very little disposed to compliment any philosopher for distinctly making known, what all men know by the reason with which they are endowed, and which we cannot but believe, however philosophers may attempt to puzzle or confound us. What explanation was requisite, in "applying the past to the future," is not apparent. In our opinion, we are not in the least indebted to any one, or to all the philosophers, for our certain belief of the first principles of truth. We have it from the Author of our being. And if any philosopher has merited a claim to the gratitude of the world in relation to such truths, it has been by detecting and refuting the sophistry by which others endeavoured to perplex the first principles of truth.

The writer admits, however, that Mr. Hume, whom he denominates, "a great metaphysician," fell into some errors on this subject, which were corrected by Reid, Stewart, and Brown.

In the second chapter of this Essay, on the uniformity of causation, the author seems to think, that although the relation between a present fact and a future one of a similar kind, has been distinctly and repeatedly noticed, yet the connexion between the present and the past has not been very particularly brought into view by philosophical writers. Incidentally, indeed, he admits, that it has been assumed, and has become the basis of reasonings by one and another; but he seems to claim the credit of being the first who clearly exhibited the subject in this view. Now, we confess, that upon the broad principle of the uniformity of causation, the operation of a cause, in time past, and in future, is so identical, that we cannot understand how any one who admits the first, can fail to perceive the second. If the general principle be evi-



dent, that the same cause uniformly produces the same effect, it must be equally true, in regard to the past, present, and future. The difference of time makes no difference whatever in our belief of the identity of the effect produced. It is a circumstance which is not perceived to have the least influence on the matter.

It seems to us, therefore, that no credit is due to this author for the distinct and particular application of the general principle of the uniformity of causation to past events. What the author has said, in the fourth and fifth chapters, in illustration of the application of this principle to moral, as well as physical causes, is more important, because, in relation to this point, there is more scepticism prevalent, as it respects the application of the general principle. Indeed, there are many, and some of no mean name, who will not agree that the same laws of causation which are acknowledged to be true in physics, are at all applicable to mind. But to us it appears, that what this writer has here said, and what he has more fully argued in the ninth chapter, on the subject of necessity, is entirely just. That every thing which is produced must have an adequate cause, is as true of mental, as of physical phenomena; and it is equally certain, that the same causes will uniformly produce the same effects, in the moral, as in the natural world. To suppose the contrary, is to confound the clearest principles of reason and common sense; and to rush at once into the region of absurdity. If any thing, whether a thought, a volition, or the most evanescent emotion, can take place without any causation, we cannot see why, on the same principles, the universe might not start into existence without a cause. Reason is not more shocked with the one absurdity than the other. And if a moral cause could be supposed to be followed by one effect at one time, and by a different effect at another, the cause being precisely the same in both cases, it would as directly impugn the principle of the uniformity of causation, as if fire at one time should burn paper, and at another produce no effect on it, although as fully subjected to its power. The reasons why moral causes are commonly thought to be less certain in their operation than those which are physical, are satisfactorily given by our author.

But we now proceed to the discussion of the main point, which we have undertaken to examine. And that no injustice may be done to the ingenious author, on whom we remark, we will cite, at some length, his own words:

“But it is only a small part of our knowledge of past events which we gather from physical evidence. By far the most important source of information of such events, is the testimony of human beings; and it is a curious, interesting, and momentous inquiry, whether we proceed on the same principle, when we avail ourselves of this moral evidence to penetrate into the past, as when we make use of that which is purely of a physical character.

“Testimony must be either oral or written. As far as the mere physical circumstances are concerned, we evidently commence our use of it, by reasoning from effects to causes. We infer, for example, that the writing before us, has been the work of some human being, in doing which, we of course assume the uniformity of causation. If, from the circumstances attending the testimony, we infer, that it is entitled to be received as veracious; if, for instance, we find it has proceeded from a man of tried integrity, and who acted under the influence of motives which render it unlikely that he should deceive, our inference still proceeds on the assumption of the same principle. I may have in other cases found these circumstances to have been the precursors or causes of true testimony: but how can I or any one tell that they have operated in the same way, in the instance before me? The reply must evidently be, that it is impossible to avoid assuming that the same causes have invariably the same effects.

“In fact, if we examine any of the rules which have been laid down for the reception of testimony, or any of those remarks which have been pointed out as enabling us to judge of its credibility, we shall find them all involving the uniformity of causation. It is allowed, on all hands, that the concurrence of a number of witnesses in the same assertion, their reputation for veracity, the fact of the testimony being against their own interest, the probability of detection in any false statements, are all circumstances enhancing the probability of what they affirm. These are considered as general principles on the subject gathered from experience, and we apply them instinctively to any new case which may be presented to us, either in the course of our own observation, or as having taken place at some former period. But it is obvious from what has just been said, that since we assume a uniformity in the succession of causes and effects, we cannot transfer our experience from any one case to another. That circumstances have produced true testimony in one or a hundred instances, can be no reason why they should produce it in a different instance, unless we assume that the same causes have necessarily the same effects.

“It is clearly known by this reasoning, that in the reception of

testimony and the use of physical evidence, we proceed on the same principle. But, in the case of testimony, there is a peculiarity not belonging to physical evidence. In the former, we not only have certain effects from which it is our task to infer the causes, or certain causes from which to infer the effects; as when we judge the writing before us to have been the work of some human being, or the testimony to be true on account of the circumstances under which it was given; but the testimony itself consists of the assertion of facts, and the nature of the facts asserted often forms part of the grounds on which the veracity of the testimony is determined: it frequently happens, that while external circumstances tend to confirm the testimony, the nature and circumstances of the facts attested render it highly improbable that any such facts which have taken place; and these two circumstances may be so exactly equivalent, as to leave the mind in irremediable doubt. In the consideration of both, however, the same assumption is involved. We think the facts improbable, because we have found them rarely occurring under the circumstances stated; we think the testimony likely to be true, because we have generally found true testimony to proceed from witnesses acting under the influence of similar motives, and what we have found in other cases we are irresistibly led to conclude, must also happen in the case before us.

“The opposition of the circumstances of the evidence and the nature of the facts, may be carried still further. Assertions are frequently made, which, in themselves, imply a breach of the uniformity of causation. From such causes the conclusions already established remove all difficulty. To weigh probabilities, to determine what credit is due to two sets of conflicting circumstances, neither of which, as far as our knowledge extends, is irreconcilable to the usual course of nature, is often a new and arduous task; but, if the principles of this essay are correct, it is easy to see what reception ought to be given to assertions professedly implying a deviation from the uniform succession of causes and effects.

“Suppose, for instance, any person to affirm, that he had exposed a cubic inch of ice, to a temperature of 200 degrees of Fahrenheit, and that at the expiration of an hour, it had retained its solidity. Here is a sequence of events asserted, which is entirely at variance with the admitted course of nature; and the slightest reflection is sufficient to show, that, to believe the assertion, would involve a logical absurdity. The intrinsic discrepancy of the facts, could never be overcome by any possible proofs of the truth of testimony.

“For, let us put the strongest case imaginable; let us suppose,

that the circumstance of the ice remaining unmelted, rests on the concurrent testimony of a great number of people—people, too, of reputation, science, and perspicacity, who had no motive for falsehood, who had discernment to perceive, and honesty to tell the truth, and whose interests would essentially suffer from any departure from veracity. Under such circumstances it may be allowed, false testimony is impossible.

“Now mark the principle on which this representation proceeds. Let us consider the positions, that what is attested by a great number of witnesses must inevitably be true,—that people of reputation and intelligence, without any apparent motive for falsehood, are invariably accurate in their testimony—and that they are, above all, incapable of violating the truth, when a want of veracity would be ruinous to their own interests. Granting all this, I ask the objector, how he knows these things are so: that men of character and in these circumstances speak the truth? He will reply, that he has invariably found them to act in this manner: but why because you have found them to act in this manner in a few or even in many cases within your own experience, or in the experience of ages, do you conclude, that they have acted so in all cases, and in the case before us? The only answer, is, that it is impossible not to take it for granted, that in precisely similar circumstances, similar results will ensue, or that like causes have always like effects.

“Thus, on the ground of the uniformity of causation, he would be maintaining the competency of testimony to prove a fact, which implies a deviation from that uniformity.

Again,

“These considerations appear to establish the important rule, that no testimony can prove any deviation from the known sequences of cause and effect, or that, at any time, similar effects have not had similar causes, or similar causes similar effects.

“In the strongest conceivable case, the argument of an advocate for the power of testimony to favour such deviations, would be this: ‘It is impossible that human testimony should not be true in these circumstances, because its falsity would be contrary to the principles of human nature; that is, it would imply a deviation from that sequence of motives and voluntary actions which has invariably been observed.’

“But, on precisely the same ground he ought to maintain, that the circumstances attested could not take place, because they are contrary to the laws of the material world, unless it can be shown, as I have before remarked, that the certainty or uniformity of causation in voluntary actions, is greater than in physical events.

“The rule now laid down is, that in fact, that by which man-

kind are universally, though, perhaps, not uniformly nor consciously guided. Let us take another case as an illustration. If a number of men should swear, that they had seen the mercury of a barometer remain at the height of 30 inches, when placed in the exhausted receiver of an air-pump, their testimony would be instantly rejected. The universal conclusion would be, that such an event was impossible. To justify the rejection of the evidence, it would not be necessary to account for so extraordinary a statement, or to have the concatenation of motives in the minds of those who asserted its truth. The motives of the witnesses might be quite inconceivable; there might be no apparent advantage to any of them in hazarding a falsehood: on the contrary, their rank in life, their reputation, their habits of integrity, the disgraceful consequences of detection, might appear irresistible dissuasions from a course of deceit. But, although these circumstances might concur in rendering their veracity probable, no man of science would listen to their evidence. People might be perplexed to account for their conduct, but all would agree as to the credit due to their statements."

We have made these extended extracts, that our readers might not only understand fully the opinions of our author, but might be put in possession of the strength of his argument in favour of them.

Every person, at all conversant with the subject, cannot but perceive that we have Hume's celebrated argument against miracles in a new dress, or, rather, in disguise: for it is remarkable, that in this whole Essay, not one word is said respecting miracles; nor is their any direct mention of divine revelation. Doubtless there was design in this. The author was unwilling to arouse the prejudices of the friends of revelation; he has, therefore, discussed the subject in the abstract, as though he had never heard of the claims of miracles as proofs of the Christian religion. This method of stealing a march on the friends of divine revelation might, perhaps, be considered as insidious, and furnish just ground of complaint on their part. We are not disposed, however, to take umbrage at the manner in which this subject has been brought forward, but shall proceed to a direct and candid examination of the principles so confidently asserted by this writer.

And, that we may not lose our time in the useless discussion of points not relevant to the main subject, we shall at once endeavour to exhibit the true point in controversy, and offer a few remarks intended to show the fallacy of the reasoning employed by the writer, whose essay is under review.



And, in the commencement, we would remark, that we do not, in the least, question the truth of the general proposition, which lies at the foundation of this author's argument. We do admit most readily and fully, "that the same causes produce the same effects;" and this is so generally acknowledged, that the pains taken in this Essay to render it evident, are, in our opinion, wholly unnecessary. This general principle does not involve, in any degree, the point at issue. But while we are so ready to concede this first principle, we are no how disposed to yield what this author seems to consider the same thing; namely, "that there never has been, nor can be, any deviation from the established laws of nature." Here, in our opinion, lies the whole fallacy of the reasoning in this Essay. The ingenious author rightly lays it down as a first principle, "that causation is uniform, or, that the same causes will uniformly produce the same effects;" but when he asserts, that to believe in a deviation from "the admitted causes of nature, is a logical absurdity," he places the matter on entirely different ground. To understand this matter distinctly, let us recur to the fact which he supposes, that some one should "assert that he had exposed a cubic inch of ice to a temperature of 200 degrees of Fahrenheit, and that at the expiration of an hour it had retained its solidity." This is the instance which he gives to illustrate his views of the uniformity of causation. This is the fact which he asserts could never be rendered credible "by any possible proofs of the truth of testimony." The first question which occurs in regard to this case is, does the truth of the fact supposed violate the general principle of the uniformity of causation? We say it does not. No man who believed such a fact would suppose that the cause was in this case the same, as that which commonly met our observation in similar external circumstances. Every man would conclude, on observing such a fact, that some extraordinary cause, not usually witnessed, was in operation. To believe that the same cause without any change, produces different effects, at different times, is one thing; but to believe, that while external circumstances are similar, an invisible and extraordinary cause is at work to produce an effect different from what is usual, is quite another thing. The artful confounding of these two things, which are manifestly distinct, is the ground of all the specious plausibility which the reasoning

in this Essay possesses. The true point at issue, therefore, is, not whether the same causes are always attended with the same effects; but it is, whether, besides the common laws of nature, there may not occasionally be supernatural causes in operation? and, whether, effects thus produced, may not be rendered credible by testimony? It is, whether the Great Author of the course of nature may not sometimes suspend the laws of nature, for wise and important purposes? If the supposition had been, that the laws of nature being alone in operation, ice remained unmelted at 200 degrees of temperature, then the conclusion of the author would be firm, on the general principle, that similar causes will always produce similar effects; but if it be asserted that a divine power has been interposed to suspend or change the laws of nature, the question is entirely changed. It is no longer whether the very same cause may produce a different effect; but whether external appearances being the same, there may not be a different effect produced by the operation of some extraordinary cause? Whether such an effect can be established by any testimony, may be a question, but it is entirely a different question from the one presented by this writer, whether an event which interferes with the uniformity of causation can be proved by testimony. We are not a little surprized, that an author so acute and discriminating, should not have perceived, that he was confounding things entirely distinct; especially, as in this very Essay he recognizes the very distinction which should have been admitted here, which is brought forward to answer a common objection against the uniformity of the operation of moral causes. After giving some instances of diversity in the effects when the causes were apparently the same, he remarks, "In all these cases there is no want of faith in the uniformity of causation: our uncertainty by no means relates to the principle itself, but to the point *whether all the same causes, and no other, are in operation*; and if the event, at any time, turn out contrary to our expectations, we feel well assured of the presence of some extraordinary cause—an assurance evidently proceeding on the assumption, that if the causes had been the same, the effects must also have been similar." pp. 176, 177. Now let this distinction, so correctly made in this case, be applied to a deviation from the usual course of nature, and all difficulty about a violation of the uniformity of causes will vanish. When an effect is produced different from what has been ob-

served usually to take place, in similar circumstances; let us only suppose, as in the case cited, that there is some extraordinary cause at work; and while we make this supposition, we do not deny the uniformity of causation, but "proceed on the assumption, that if the causes had been the same, the effects must have been similar."

Having cleared the subject of this difficulty, we are now prepared to examine the question which is really in controversy, and which is no other than this, "Whether an event which implies a deviation from the sequence of causes, or from the established laws of nature, can be proved by any testimony, however strong?" There is still another question, however, which must be settled with this author, before we can proceed to the main point; and that is, "Is such an event, as involves a real deviation from the laws of nature, possible?" We certainly should not have judged it necessary to discuss this question with a theist,—and such we understand this writer professes to be—were it not, that in a subsequent chapter of this same *Essay*, he roundly asserts, that all such events are impossible. His words, (p. 212,) are, "An event is impossible which contradicts our experience, or which implies, that the same causes have produced different effects. Thus, when we pronounce, that it is impossible for a piece of ice to remain in the midst of burning coals without being dissolved, our conclusion involves a complete knowledge of this particular effect of fire on ice, as well as the assumption that what has taken place in our own experience must always have occurred under precisely the same circumstances. If I am not greatly deceived, the acutest reasoner, the closest thinker, the most subtile analyser of words, will find himself unable to produce any other meaning of the term impossible, than that which is here assigned to it." Now, this definition of the word, impossible, is passing strange to us. What! will this author allow nothing to the power of God? Will he deny to the Creator the power of suspending his own laws, which he has impressed on the universe? Is it true, that the Almighty cannot prevent the melting of a piece of ice in the fire? Surely, no theist will be so insane as to maintain this. Where, then, is the impossibility of events occurring which are deviations from the sequence of natural causes?

The author, upon a review of what he has here written concerning possibility and impossibility, seems to have felt some dubiety about the correctness of his definition; for, not-

withstanding his challenge to men of the nicest discrimination and acutest reasoning powers, to invent any other meaning of the word impossible, than the one he had given, for he himself gives us another in a foot-note, which comes much nearer the truth, than the one in the text, and very different from it.

Impossibility, according to the definition given by our author, in the passage cited, is nothing else than a deviation from the established course of nature. If it could be assumed as a certainty, that the Great Author of the Universe never would interpose his immediate agency contrary to the usual and established course of events, then there might be some ground for the assertion, that a departure from the course of nature was an impossibility. But this is a position too important, in this controversy, to be assumed without the clearest proof; and yet, we are persuaded, that not the shadow of evidence ever has, or can be adduced, to prove, that the Maker of the world will never exert his power to suspend or alter, on some occasion, those laws which he has established. As to his physical power to cause a deviation from these laws, it would be idle to waste time in proving it, since the denial of such a power in deity, is denying his very existence. A God who could not control and govern, at will, his own creatures, has none of the attributes of God. But it may be alleged, that his plan is so perfect that he never can have occasion to interpose his power to alter any thing which he has ordained. Very good; but who can tell us what the plan of the Almighty is, and that such an immediate interposition of his agency, on certain occasions, may not be an important part of his original plan? It is not for short-sighted creatures, such as we are, to say what is or is not consistent with the plan of Him who is infinite in knowledge. If the thing be possible, and not repugnant to the moral attributes of God, no one has a right to assert, that it may not exist. And in regard to events which merely imply the exertion of divine power in a different way from what is usual, there is not the shadow of evidence, that they are in any respect inconsistent with the character of the Supreme Being. For what are the laws of nature, but modes of the divine operation; and if generally his power is exerted according to a uniform rule, yet this general uniformity does not lay him under any obligation, never, on any occasion, to depart from the course established. It would be an unreasonable limitation of the Maker and Governor of the universe, to

confine Him perpetually, to one mode of operation. There are, indeed, strong reasons why the laws of nature should be uniform in their ordinary operation; but there may also exist strong reasons for an occasional deviation from the common course: and the same wisdom which dictated the establishment of such regular laws, may also dictate, that, for the accomplishment of special objects of importance, it may be highly proper to deviate from them. And as it relates to this point, it matters not whether we adopt the theory, that the operation of the laws of nature is the agency of God himself, according to rules which he has established, or maintain, that in the formation of the universe, he communicated certain powers and active properties to inanimate nature; for as, in the first case, it is evident, that God who is infinitely free and sovereign, can, at pleasure, change his own operation; so, in the other, it is equally obvious, that he who communicated certain powers to matter, is able, according to his will, to control and suspend the operation of these second causes. The conclusion is, therefore, most manifest, that there is nothing absurd or impossible in the idea of a deviation from the sequence of causes, as they ordinarily take place in the regular course of the laws of nature. Whether, in fact, there are any such events, is a matter not to be determined by any reasoning on general principles, but in the manner in which we come to the knowledge of all facts, by experience, observation, and testimony. And all we have aimed at in the preceding remarks, is to show, that there exists no such presumption against facts of this particular kind, as would render it unreasonable to credit them, provided they are accompanied by such evidence as satisfies the mind of an impartial inquirer.

The question which we now have to discuss is precisely the same as that treated by Mr. Hume, in his celebrated *Essay on Miracles*. The author, whose work we are considering, attempts to reduce us precisely to the same dilemma, as did Mr. Hume his readers, by a complete equipoise of evidence. The case is thus stated: A fact is supposed to be attested by such a force of testimony, that there is nothing wanting to render it satisfactory; the witnesses are intelligent; of known integrity; would suffer injury by a false statement; are sufficiently numerous; and are harmonious and consistent in the testimony which they deliver. Such testimony, it is acknowledged, if it stood alone, would be competent to command our unwavering assent: but a counteraction may arise from the nature of



the facts attested: they may imply that the same causes do not always produce the same effects; but this would be to contradict a plain axiom of common sense, confirmed by universal experience. Here, then, we have complete evidence on both sides of a proposition; and of course we can believe in neither. The rational mind, in such circumstances, can neither believe nor disbelieve; it must remain neutral. But our ingenious author, after bringing us to this apparent equipoise of evidence, by which all assent is rendered impossible, affords us some relief, by discovering that the evidence from testimony never can be as convincing as that which we have for the uniformity of causation. "The causes of testimony," he observes, "or in other words, those considerations which operate on the mind of the witnesses, cannot be always ascertained; and as we are uncertain as to the causes in operation, we cannot be certain of the effects; we cannot be sure that the circumstances of the witnesses are such as have before given rise to true testimony, and consequently we cannot be sure, that the testimony is true." According to this view, we can be absolutely certain of nothing, the knowledge of which is obtained by testimony: but every man's experience will contradict this statement; for who needs to be informed, that there are thousands of facts, known no otherwise than by testimony, of the certainty of which we have no more doubt than of our own existence. Supposing then the fact which is contrary to the uniformity of causation, to be attended with testimony of this kind, the equipoise must exist.

But there is one consideration which seems equally to have escaped the notice of Mr. Hume and this Essayist. It is, that the same contrariety of evidence, and consequent equipoise, destroying all assent, must take place between the evidence of our senses and the uniformity of causation; for there is no reason why this equipoise, and mutual destruction of conflicting evidence, should exist in relation to testimony alone: the very same thing must necessarily occur, if a fact be observed by our senses, which is contrary to the established course of nature. Thus, if we should see with our own eyes a cubic inch of ice placed in a temperature of 200 degrees of Fahrenheit, and should distinctly observe, that it remained unmelted at the expiration of an hour, we could not believe the fact; for although nothing can be more certain to us than what we see; yet as this fact implies, that the same causes do not always produce the same effects; and as this is a self-evident truth,

the mind, between these conflicting and equally balanced evidences, must remain in a state of perfect neutrality; neither believing nor disbelieving the fact. And this effect must take place, however frequently we might witness the fact, or whatever number of persons should concur with us, as to the nature of the fact observed. For however certain we might be, that we saw the ice unmelted, yet no certainty from the evidence of sense can be greater than that which we have that the same causes will always produce the same effects.

Thus would these philosophers, by their abstract and metaphysical reasonings, persuade us to disbelieve even the evidence of our own senses. It is true, as was observed, that neither this writer nor Mr. Hume has pushed the argument to this consequence, nor do they seem to have been aware of it; but we think it must be evident to every impartial mind, that the difficulty which they have so forcibly and confidently presented, is as applicable to the evidence of the senses, as to that of testimony. But whether, if we should witness a fact in direct contrariety to the known and established laws of nature, we should hesitate to believe it, is a thing not to be determined by abstract reasoning on general principles; every man is capable of deciding it for himself. Indeed, the effect which any kind of evidence will have on the mind can only be known by experience; and on this ground we may assert, that what a man plainly and repeatedly sees he will believe. If any plain, sensible man should see ice remain unmelted at 200 degrees of Fahrenheit, he would not need to refer to the uniformity of causation, or any other abstract principle, before he gave his assent. He would, indeed, esteem it an extraordinary phenomenon, for which he could not account; and he might at first be ready to suppose that there was something deceptive in the appearance; but if, after repeated and thorough examinations, he should find that it was a reality; and, especially, if he found that the same impression was made on a multitude of other persons, he could not do otherwise than believe the fact to be, as it appeared to his senses. And such an observer would experience no difficulty in giving his assent, from any equipoise of conflicting evidence, which might be supposed to exist. Indeed, if such a fact were witnessed by a dozen intelligent men, not one of them would conclude that there was an infringement of the uniformity of causation; or that the same effects did not always follow the same causes; but the supposition of every one of them

would be, that there was an extraordinary cause in operation, to which the observed effect must be ascribed. No one would be so foolish as to suppose, that if heat operated according to the laws which usually regulate it, and no other cause was concerned in the effect, that ice would remain unmelted for an hour, in such a temperature. In all cases where an effect different from the ordinary one in the same circumstances takes place, we are instinctively led to the supposition of the operation of an extraordinary cause, although we may be entirely ignorant of its nature. But when a real deviation from the laws of nature is observed, the rational conclusion is, that the power of God must have been interposed; since none has power to control or suspend the laws of nature but he that established them: and such an event is properly called a miracle. Now, although it requires strong evidence to satisfy an impartial mind of the existence of a miracle, the difficulty of believing in such a fact, does not in the least depend upon the principle assumed by the Essayist; namely, that such an event implies a violation of the uniformity of causation: for as has been shown, that idea never enters the mind of any one. The difficulty in believing in a miracle is owing to the presumption, arising from common experience, that the laws of nature will remain the same; and from the circumstance that we may never before have witnessed an event of this kind. But the thought that the thing is impossible to divine power, would never be likely to enter into any unsophisticated mind; and nothing would be requisite to produce the fullest conviction of its truth, but the opportunity of observing it in circumstances favourable to a distinct view of the fact. And when the miracle is attended by such evidence as commands assent, such as that of our own senses, no difficulty of crediting the fact would ever be experienced, on account of the uniformity of causation, or on any other account whatever.

If the preceding observations are correct, as it relates to facts which fall under the observation of the senses, the same conclusions will be true in regard to facts made known to us by testimony, of the strongest kind. It is true, this writer seems to maintain, that there is always some uncertainty in the information derived from this source. "The causes of testimony," says he, "or those considerations which operate on the minds of the witnesses, cannot always be ascertained; and as we are uncertain as to the causes in operation, we cannot be certain of the effects; we cannot be sure that the circumstances of the witnesses are such as

have given rise to true testimony, and, consequently, we cannot be sure that the testimony is true." According to this doctrine, testimony can in no case whatever lay a rational foundation for unhesitating assent to any fact. However numerous, and however respectable the witnesses, and whatever may be their circumstances, "we cannot be sure that the testimony is true." But is this statement correct? Is it not in direct repugnance to the experience and conviction of every man? How do most of us know, that there is in the world such a country as France, or Great Britain? Is it not by testimony? And can we not be certain respecting this, and a thousand other matters, which we know only by the information of others? Does any intelligent man doubt any more whether there lately existed in Europe such a man as Napoleon Bonaparte, or such a man as the Duke of Wellington? The truth is, that every man is conscious of believing thousands of facts on the testimony of others with fully as much certainty as he does the things which pass before his eyes; and it would be in vain to tell men that they might be deceived in any case where their knowledge depended on testimony, "because we cannot be sure that the testimony is true;" we might as well attempt to persuade them that they did not perceive the light which was shining around them, or even that they did not exist. This being a subject on which every man's own convictions are sufficient, no argument is needed. The case is as plain as it can be. Admitting, then that testimony may be such as to remove all doubt or uncertainty, as much as the evidence of the senses or of consciousness, the question is, supposing testimony of this kind to exist in support of a fact which implies a deviation from the regular operation of the laws of nature, Can we on the ground of such testimony credit the miracle? When the question is thus stated, the doctrine of this philosopher is, in conformity with his prototype, Mr. Hume, that there can arise no rational belief; for, however strong the testimony may be, it cannot be stronger than the intuitive certainty, that the same causes must be followed by the same effects. Our belief in testimony itself, he informs us, is founded on the same principle; for the reason why we believe that witnesses, in certain circumstances, will speak the truth, is, because we have always observed, that when thus situated, they do speak the truth. Now, the fallacy of this statement has already been shown: a principle is assumed which is altogether incorrect; or, rather, a true principle is applied to a case to which it does not belong. It is true, that

the same cause does uniformly produce the same effect: concerning this there is not, nor can there be any dispute. But we have shown, that in the case of a deviation from the laws of nature, there is no need of calling this first principle at all into question. It is not alleged, that the miraculous fact is produced by the simple operation of the laws of nature; but the very contrary is asserted and believed, in every such case. Let the fact be, that some combustible substance, when cast into a hot fire, is not touched by the flame; or, to use the author's favourite illustration, that a piece of ice remains for an hour in a hot fire without being melted. Now, if it was maintained or believed, that no cause operated here but the fire, according to its common properties, there would be an absurdity in the supposition; a cause on one day produces a different effect from what the same cause does on another day. To-day a hot fire melts ice; to-morrow a fire of the same kind does not melt ice. But we venture to affirm, that this is a supposition which was never made by the most credulous of mortals. We believe that no persons, however rude, ever believed in a fact as miraculous, who did not suppose that some other than the common natural cause was in operation to produce that effect. Indeed, this idea enters into every definition of a miracle: it is an effect produced by some supernatural power. How then does such a belief militate with the principle of the uniformity of causation? So far from this, it recognises the axiom, and therefore ascribes the effect not to an ordinary but to an extraordinary cause. Whether, in any given case, the testimony is sufficient, to induce an impartial man to believe in the existence of such a supernatural operation is altogether a different question. The point, and the only point now under discussion is, whether the uniform sequence of effects creates an insuperable bar in the way of our believing in a miracle, or in an event which is a deviation from the common course of nature. And we trust that we have—with some repetition perhaps—made it evident, that this principle of common sense, that the same cause operates uniformly, or as long as it is the same produces the same effects, is, in no degree violated by the belief in miracles; because, in every miracle, it is not only supposed, but explicitly taught, that the effect owes its existence, not to the same cause which operates in the usual course of the laws of nature, but to a divine and supernatural agent, by whose interposition the laws of nature are suspended or counteracted. That an agent capable of producing such an effect



exists in the universe, none but an atheist will deny; and that the Creator of the world will never choose so to interpose as to give a striking evidence of his power and providence, is what no one has any right to assert. What would be our conclusions in regard to this matter, if we were left to reason on the subject, may be doubtful; but when facts are seen by ourselves, or reported to us by a sufficient number of faithful and intelligent witnesses, there remains no rational alternative, but to give due credit to what is thus clearly made known. Multitudes of events which are not miraculous, are, prior to experience, altogether improbable; but when they actually occur before our eyes, or when hundreds of disinterested persons assure us that they have witnessed them, we never make the abstract improbability of their occurrence a reason for disbelieving them. The very same principle applies to miracles. There may be, to our apprehension, a great improbability that the laws of nature will ever be suspended by divine power, but when we ourselves see events by which these laws are contravened, or, when a sufficient number of witnesses agree in attesting such facts, we cannot but receive as true, what we see with our own eyes, and what is reported by men of truth and intelligence. What kind and degree of testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, or a real deviation from the laws of nature, is a thing not to be ascertained by abstract reasoning; but when the evidence is exhibited, and the circumstances of any particular fact understood, no man needs to be informed what he should believe or disbelieve. Indeed, he has no choice in the case, if he only suffers the evidence to be fairly presented to his mind; for, as this writer has abundantly shown, belief in such a case is involuntary, whatever may be said or reasoned, abstractly, respecting the impossibility of believing in a fact which involves a departure from the course of nature; yet, if such a fact be clearly and repeatedly presented to our sight; or if it be attested by hundreds and thousands of persons who have no conceivable motive to assert what is false in the case, we should be constrained in such case to yield our assent; and the man who should in such circumstances, declare that he disbelieved what he saw with his eyes, or was attested by such a number of veracious witnesses, ought to be suspected of falsifying his own convictions, rather than disbelieving his own senses, or rejecting the testimony of a multitude of sensible and impartial witnesses.

When this author asserts, that our belief in testimony arises

from our having observed, that witnesses of a certain character and in certain circumstances do invariably speak the truth, and may therefore itself be resolved into the law of uniform causation, he does but revive Mr. Hume's principle, that our belief in testimony is the effect of experience; an opinion which has been refuted by Doctor George Campbell, of Aberdeen, in his work on Miracles, with a clearness and force, which leaves nothing to be done or desired in regard to this matter. It is there shown that belief in the testimony of others is an ultimate law of our nature, and is prior to and independent of experience; and that the effect of experience on our belief in testimony is rather to weaken it; which is confirmed by the fact that children are more credulous than adults; and prior to the experience of the want of veracity in many, receive indiscriminately as true every thing which is told them. It might, we think, be demonstrated, that if belief in testimony depended on experience, it would be impossible for man to acquire knowledge; but it is not to our purpose, at present, to discuss this subject. We shall, therefore, bring our review of this volume to a close, by an illustration drawn from Sacred History. It is related in the book of Daniel, iii. 20, that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, "commanded the most mighty men in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore, because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men—and these three men Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound, into the midst of the burning fiery furnace." While the king surrounded by an immense multitude of people was looking into the furnace, to his astonishment he observed, that the men were walking about unhurt in the midst of the fire, and when they were called, they came forth; and "upon their bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed; neither were their coats changed, nor had the smell of fire passed on them." Now, it is not our object to express any opinion respecting the credibility of this fact; but merely to use it by way of illustrating the views which we have given, respecting the effect which would be produced by witnessing such a miracle; or by having it attested in a certain way. We will now suppose, that the facts here recorded did actually take place, and that they were witnessed

by the king and all his courtiers and officers, and by the vast multitude assembled from all the provinces of his empire to worship the golden image which he had erected. A solitary man may be deceived even by his own senses; or rather, his nervous system may be so deranged, that he may take his own imaginations for realities; or the visual organ may be diseased, or the medium through which the light is transmitted may be deceptive; but when we find thousands of people concurring with us in the impression made on their senses, then we are sure that we are not mocked by an apparition, or mere illusion. In the case just stated, the fact was of a nature to be judged of by all; and all are supposed to have seen these men cast into the fiery furnace. We ask, whether in such circumstances any man could disbelieve or doubt? No one will assert it. True, some philosopher might have made a wise speech on the occasion, and might have reasoned abstrusely respecting cause and effect, and the invariable uniformity of causation; he might have cautioned the king and all his counsellors, and the people, not to give credit to what they saw, for it could not be true, since it contradicted an acknowledged axiom; and even if the evidence of their senses appeared ever so clear and convincing, it ought to have no other effect than to bring their minds to an exact equipoise, or perfect suspense of all belief; because the evidence on the other side was equally strong and convincing, being no other than a self-evident truth, to disbelieve which would be "a logical absurdity." What effect may we suppose such philosophical reasoning would have had, when arrayed against the plain testimony of all the senses?

But it may be alleged, that neither Mr. Hume nor his anonymous disciple has asserted, that we could not believe in a miracle, if we had such a fact fairly exhibited before our eyes. This is true; they have not extended their principle so far; but we aver, and think we have proved, that it is as applicable to the evidence of the senses as of testimony. To bring the matter, however, to the very point, on which they are desirous that it should bear; let us suppose that Daniel had been absent on the king's business, but arriving just at the close of the wonderful scene, he hears the same testimony from the king and his counsellors. The men themselves being his particular friends, he interrogates them, and hears a full report of their wonderful deliverance from the power of the fire, of the fate of the men who cast them into the furnace. If mere testimony could have

added to his certainty, thousands and tens of thousands, on every side, were loudly proclaiming their admiration of the miraculous deliverance of these young men. Now, supposing Daniel not to have been a witness of the transaction; but to have received the testimony just mentioned, will any candid man assert, that his persuasion of the truth of the facts was not as firm and as rational, as if he had seen them with his own eyes? And it will be to no purpose to allege, that few facts are ever attested by such evidence as this: there are thousands within the knowledge of every man, of the truth of which he is as fully convinced, as of those which are daily passing before his eyes. And as our object is, not to weigh the different kinds of testimony, and to ascertain their force, but to bring to the test the principle which has been so confidently laid down by this ingenious author; for if his principle was correct, it would make no difference how strong the testimony might be; for the evidence of the uniformity of causation, being an intuitive truth, and as certain as any thing can be, would be sufficient, completely to counterbalance, if it did not overpower, the highest testimony which can be imagined.

If the opinions which we have selected for examination had no intimate connexion with our religious belief, or the practical system of morality, we should have left them to find what acceptance they might, with speculative men; but believing, that the general adoption of the philosophical principles of this author would be subversive of divine revelation, and injurious to sound morality, we have judged it expedient to devote a portion of our pages to an examination and refutation of a theory, which is brought forward with much appearance of candor, and defended with much plausibility.

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#### ART. VI.—THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOHN LIVINGSTON.

THE conversion of five hundred souls through the instrumentality of a single sermon may seem incredible. Yet this took place in Scotland, two hundred years ago; and what is stranger still, under the preaching of one who, if he were now living, would be thought, by many good men among us, so antiquated a Calvinist, as to be shut out from all hope of usefulness.

In courts of law we often see pleadings, of which the va-

rious counts belie one another; and in religious debates we sometimes see the same thing. For instance: our brethren desire to alarm or shame us out of our old-fashioned modes of argument drawn from revivals. First: There are no revivals of religion where new divinity is not preached; witness all the congregations of old-school theologians; in none of them are there awakenings; witness the long dearth in the churches where ancient divinity has been resounding for two centuries. This argument we have seen and heard. Secondly: There have been revivals among those who are Presbyterians of the old stamp; but then it took place under new divinity. Livingston preached the new divinity, without knowing it. Whitefield, the Tennents, Davies, preached the new divinity. This argument we have also read and heard. These arguments neutralize one another, yet we have seen them in different pages of the same work.

Those are greatly in error who suppose the early Presbyterians of Scotland to have been mere contenders for orthodoxy or discipline. Yet such is the error of many who assume the Presbyterian name. Ignorant of the story of those eventful times, they take up the floating falsehoods respecting our fathers, which were put in motion by men who hated godliness wherever they saw it. With such persons, Knox is thought of only as a tawny-bearded fanatic, and the second generation of worthies as sticklers for mere order and mere creeds, without any intimacy with that fresh fountain of spiritual health, which forsooth has been sealed up till now. We shall try to show that specimens may be given of warm piety, of successful preaching, of remarkable conversions, and we shall use as the basis of our remarks the name of John Livingston; and as we wish to present this favoured preacher to the view of our readers, we shall, by way of elucidation, dwell a little upon the character of some who preceded him; and first of John Welsh, the son-in-law of Knox. Of this man an old Scotsman, who had seen him, once said to an inquirer, "O, sir, he was a type of Christ:" an expression, as is observed by the historian, more significant than proper. The gleanings we make from his memoirs are such as these, and no modern saints will contemn them: he gave himself wholly to ministerial exercises; he preached once every day; was unwearied in his studies, having abridged Suarez in his old age; his preaching may be estimated by his extant sermons, which ought to be republished. One of his hearers, himself afterwards a



minister, said, that it was all but impossible to refrain from tears when he preached. "Sometimes, before he went to sermon, he would send for his elders, and tell them he was afraid to go to the pulpit, because he found himself sore deserted; and therefore desire one or more of them to pray; and then he would venture to the pulpit. But it was observed, that this humbling exercise used ordinarily to be followed with a flame of extraordinary assistance." "He would many times retire to the church of Ayr, which was at some distance from the town, and there spend the whole night in prayer; for he used to allow his affections full expressions, and prayed not only with an audible, but sometimes a loud voice; nor did he irk in that solitude, all the night over; which hath (it may be) occasioned the contemptible slander of some malicious enemies, who were so bold, as to call him no less than a wizard." (*Life*, p. 15.) "He wondered how a Christian could lie in a bed all night, and not rise to pray." After being long a prisoner in his native land, he went to France, where he lived about sixteen years, as pastor of a church in St. Jean de Angely. He returned to England, without being able however to obtain leave of James I. to revisit his beloved country. He died in London.

Among those ministers with whom Mr. Livingston was personally acquainted, is named Robert Bruce, of Edinburgh, second son of the "laird of Airth." His academical education was received in France; but he studied theology at St. Andrews. He began to preach in 1540. "No man," says Livingston, "had so many seals of his ministry; yea, many of his hearers thought no man since the days of the Apostles did speak with such power. He had a very majestic countenance, and whenever he did speak in public or private, yea, whenever he read the word, I thought it had such force as I never discerned in any other man. He had a notable faculty of searching the Scriptures, and explaining the most obscure mysteries in it. He was much exercised in conscience, whereby he was signally fitted to deal with others under troubles of mind." "I was his hearer there [at the parish of Larber] a great part of the summer 1627, and many others beside the parishioners attended on his ministry from different quarters. It was his custom after the first sermon, to retire by himself for prayer, and one day some noblemen who had far to ride, wearying at his long stay, sent the beadle to learn if there was any appearance of his coming; the man returned and told them *'I think he shall not come out this*

day, for I heard him constantly saying to some one, that he will not and cannot go without him, and I do not hear the other answer him a word at all.'” How this little incident may affect the generality of readers, we are unable to predict, but to us there is something so touching in this view of a minister’s wrestling with the God of Israel, that we hold the anecdote worthy of inscription in every pulpit and in every preacher’s closet. “He was (adds Livingston,) both in public and private *very short in prayers with others*; but then every sentence was *like a bolt shot up to heaven*. On a time I went to Edinburgh to see him, in the company of the tutor of Bonington. When we called on him about eight o’clock in the morning, he told us he was not for any company; and when we urged him to tell us the cause, suspecting some other thing than we soon learned was the case, he answered, that when he went to bed he had a good measure of the Lord’s presence, and that he had wrestled with Him an hour or two before we came in, and had not yet got access; so we left him. At another time, I went to his house, but saw him not till it was very late. When he came out of his closet his face was foul with weeping, and he told me that he had that day learned what torture and hardships Dr. Alexander Leighton,\* our countryman had been put to at London, and added *If I had been faithful, I might have had the pillory, and some of my blood shed for Christ, as well as he, but he hath got the crown from us all*. When he died, Anno 1631, and his sight failed him, I heard that he called for his household Bible, and desired to put his finger on the twenty-eighth verse of the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, (‘And we do know that all things work together for good,’ &c.) and then told those present, that he died in the faith that all things, even death itself work together for his good.”†

To return now to the principal subject of these commemorative hints, the Rev. John Livingston; we remark, that he was the ancestor of the late Rev. John H. Livingston, D.D., of New Brunswick, and of the Livingston family of the North River; and that he is known as the favoured instrument of the Holy Spirit in the awakening of five hundred souls by one sermon. We have obtained from a highly respected descen-

\* The father of Archbishop Leighton, a man of the same faith with his most celebrated son, but of far greater constancy and intrepidity in the defence of primitive order and discipline. He was pilloried, slit in the nose, and cropped.

† Livingston’s Memorable Characteristics, p. 74.

dant of this holy man, a “Brief Historical Relation of the Life of Mr. John Livington, Minister of the Gospel; first at Killinchie in Ireland, next at Stranrawer, and thereafter at Ancrum in Scotland, and at last at Rotterdam in Holland. Containing several observations of the Divine goodness manifested to him in the several occurrences thereof. Written by himself, during his banishment for the cause of Christ.” From this autobiography we propose to abstract some account of the man whom the Lord was pleased so signally to honour, in the humble hope that it may tend to open the eyes of some who find it to their interest to charge upon the theology of the old Scottish School, a total inefficiency as it regards the awakening of ministerial zeal, and the conversion of sinners. It ought by no means to avail such persons in argument to say, as is common, of every minister who preaches with success, that he is *ipso facto* a man of the new stamp. So pitiable an assumption of the point in question, so disingenuous a sleight in changing the meaning of terms in the debate, and so palpable a dereliction of the real ground of their defence, might be expected of a Loyolist; scarcely of a descendant of Presbyterians. And indeed those who take this unkind advantage, and claim every thing good as theirs, *because* it is good, are not the descendants of Presbyterians. Their lineaments betray no family likeness to the Melvils, Bruces, Welshs, Hamiltons, and Gillespies of our fathers’ land: *our* fathers’ land, for we are not slow to avow that we allege a theological descent from a race of reformers who bear comparison with the martyrs and confessors of any day: that the doctrines for which they contended, and the church order for which they bled, are those which we maintain; and this, not because they contended and bled for them, still less because they are *expedient*, or adapted to produce such and such effects—to reach the conscience—to precipitate the decision of the will—to multiply professors; but because we find them in that Bible which was the *vade mecum* of every genuine Presbyterian, at home and by the way,—in the cavern, upon the hill-side, and at the stake. Of such truth, of such men, God forbid that we should be ashamed!

John Livingston was born in Monybroch, (or Kilsyth) in Stirlingshire, on the 21st of June, 1603. His father William Livingston was settled as pastor, first at Kilsyth, where he was installed in 1600, and secondly at Lanerk, whither he was translated in 1614, and where he died, aged sixty-five years, in 1641. The great-grandfather of John Livingston was slain at Pinkiefield

in 1547. William Livingston was a zealous labourer and patient sufferer for reformation, and for his non-conformity was deprived of his ministry at both the places just named.

After some domestic training, John Livingston was entered in the university of Glasgow in 1617, and was graduated as master in 1621. While at this institution he had his ambition much fired with the hope of eminence as a classic and logician; but providence thwarted his designs, partly by means of the favouritism then prevailing, and partly by the chastisement of disease. We find him sitting down to the study of Hebrew immediately upon his enlargement from college rules. Agreeably to the almost universal custom of the reformed churches, he approached the Lord's Supper at a very early age; and it would seem from his brief hints, that his first confirmed hopes were called forth on the occasion of his first communion. His desire, nevertheless, was to be a physician, and he entreated his father to send him to France, to study medicine. As he found himself repelled from his chosen path by a concurrence of circumstances, he fell upon a method of resolving his doubts which may safely be recommended to all young men in similar circumstances: he 'sought the Lord.' "I resolved," says he, "that I would spend a day alone before God, and knowing of a secret cave, on the south side of Mousewater, a little above the house of Jerviswood, over against Cleghornwood, I went thither, and after many a to and fro, and much confusion, and fear about the state of my soul, I thought it was made out to me, that I behooved to preach Christ Jesus, which if I did not, I should have no assurance of salvation. Upon this I laid aside all thoughts of France and medicine and land, and betook me to the study of divinity." We need not wonder that after such a day, so spent, and with such results, his subsequent ministry was marked by striking tokens of divine favour.

In 1625 Mr. Livingston began to preach, and for more than eighteen months continued principally at his father's house in Lanerk. At this period of his ministry, he pursued the laborious method of writing his sermons in full, and committing them to memory, a slavish toil, which he was induced to abandon by a circumstance that shall be related with all the naïveté of the author: "One day (says he) being to preach after the communion of Quodquan, and having in readiness only a sermon which I had preached before in another kirk, and perceiving several to be at Quodquan, who had been at the other

kirk, I resolved to choose a new text, and having but little time, wrote only some notes of the heads I was to deliver, yet I found at that time more assistance in the enlarging of these points, and more motion in my own heart, than ever I had found before; and after that I never wrote all at length, but only notes."

In the year 1626, he was invited into Galloway, where he preached for some time, and received a joint call from the Presbytery of Linlithgow, and the parish of Torpichen to become pastor at the latter place. Here he would have been ordained, had it not been for Bishop Spottswood, who interposed his veto, on account of Mr. Livingston's non-conformity. Accordingly, in autumn of 1627, he departed, having found, says he, "the two or three last Sabbaths I preached there, the sweetest Sabbaths, although sorrowful, that I had seen in that place." From this time until his visit to Ireland in 1630, he spent his time between his father's house, and the house of the Earl of Wigtoun: preaching, as occasion offered, at Lanerk, Irvine, "the Shots" and other places.

Much has been said of a noted sermon of Mr. Livingston at the "Kirk of Shots." In noticing it, we have no desire to represent the instrumentality then used, as having any such efficiency (even by congruity) as would lead to the supposition that if we could preach just as Mr. Livingston then preached, we should witness the same results. We are not among the number of those who make apparent success a criterion of doctrine, nor do we limit the Holy One of Israel to any specific methods of operation: yet as we find ourselves charged with enmity to revivals of religion, and to the simultaneous conversion of multitudes, and as this our alleged enmity to every good word and work is furthermore charged as coming by lineal descent from our paternal creed, and unavoidably connected with our peculiarities of faith, we take our position of defence behind a line of facts. We deny the validity of the argument from supposed conversions to the truth of a system, we have ever denied it; it is not we who have fled to any such methods of ratiocination; but *ex confesso* the argument is good when retorted upon its originators, and we claim the right of so using it as to silence the battery of our "otherwise minded" brethren, while we rest the defence of the truth upon a "more sure word of prophecy."

"The parish of Shots (we quote Mr. Livingston's words) bor-



derdered on the parish of Torpichen, . . . . . and I was sometimes invited by Mr. John Hance, minister of Shots, to preach there. In that place I used to find more liberty in preaching than elsewhere; yea, the only day in all my life wherein I found most of the presence of God in preaching, was *on a Monday, after the communion, preaching* in the Church-yard of Shots, June 21, 1630. The night before, I had been with some Christians, who *spent the night in prayer and conference*. When I was alone in the fields, about eight or nine o'clock in the morning, before we were to go to sermon, there came such a misgiving spirit upon me, considering my unworthiness and weakness, and the expectation of the people, that I was consulting with myself to have stolen away somewhere, and declined that day's preaching, but that I thought I durst not so far distrust God, and so went to sermon, and got good assistance about an hour and a half, upon the points which I had meditated on. *Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26.* "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." And in the end, offering to close with some words of exhortation, I was led on about an hour's time, in a strain of exhortation and warning, with much liberty and melting of heart, as I never had the like in public all my life-time."

Now from any thing which is said in Mr. Livingston's autobiography, no man would be led to suspect that even a single soul had been awakened by this sermon. Yet we learn from the best authority, that no less than five hundred persons were, as was believed, converted upon that occasion!\* Is this the manner of the present day? Is this silence respecting personal success a besetting sin of our leading preachers? We trow not.

We observe upon this narrative, that Mr. Livingston himself treats it as a rare instance of enlargement and divine assistance; not as part and parcel of a regular and unfailling

\* Speaking of these times of persecution, John Brown, of Haddington, says in his "Compendious History of the Church of Scotland," p. 98—"Meanwhile, faithful ministers were remarkably countenanced of God at their sacramental and other occasions. Multitudes crowded to their communions; and being eager to hear as much of the Gospel as they could, when they had an opportunity of it, they began to hear one sermon upon Saturday before, and another on the Monday after. Mr. John Livingston, a probationer, after having run so far off, that morning, preached a sermon at the kirk of Shots, on Monday, June 21, at which 500 were converted to Christ."

scheme of measures; that the appeal to that God, without whom even Paul would plant in vain, is mainly relied on; and that the modesty of the preacher so far from permitting him to blazon his own name as a successful preacher, even in these memorials written in exile, forbids his even mentioning that any considerable numbers were awakened.

We know two very convenient methods of evading this,— methods, by the bye, turned from the anvil to suit the emergency of a sturdy argument; and we doubt not that new ground can be taken upon every new assault of truth. The two which we intend are these: it is, first, alleged that all who have ever converted men to God have preached just as those who now claim to be the sole labourers in this glorious harvest: a position which we give over to the candid reader for examination. Or, secondly, it is maintained that divine truth, once deemed immutable, has its moonlike phases, conforming itself to various cycles of the Church, and that what was good and true in Scotland, in 1630, is deleterious and seductive in America, in 1832. We are serious in this statement, whatever some of our happily untaught readers may imagine: this is the gist of an argument which has been heard from pulpits and professor's chairs: *Once* it was right to preach dependence; *now* it is right to preach accountability; and the great art of the preacher is evinced in striking the balance between antagonizing principles, and hitting the invisible demarcation between two clashing schemes. O how unlike to this calculating, manœuvring, cold, and we must say worldly policy, is the high and holy disregard of consequences evinced by our forefathers! Hear again the reminiscences of the aged Livingstone, recorded in his *Patmos*: “I found that much studying did not so help me in preaching, as the getting of my heart brought to a spiritual disposition: yea, sometimes I thought the hunger of the hearers helped me more than my own preparation. Many a time I found that which was suggested to me in the delivery was more refreshful to myself, and edifying to the hearers, than what I had premeditated. I was often much deserted and cast down in preaching, and sometimes tolerably assisted. I never preached a sermon that I would be earnest to see again in writ but two. The one was at a communion on a Monday at the *Kirk of Shots*, and the other on a Monday after a communion in Holywood. *And both these times I had spent the whole night before with Christians* [in prayer and conference, as appears from the quotation next preceding]

*with any more than ordinary preparation.*” Be it observed then, that our remarks are not intended to assault any measures, however singular, however new: we freely accord to our brethren the principle that new emergencies demand measures somewhat diverse from those in common use; nay more, that novelty itself may at times be an important aid in thawing a congregation out of the icy fetters of immemorial precedents. We are therefore using no aggressive reasons, urging no expedencies against those who pursue their own plans, claiming to ourselves no *exclusive* prerogative of usefulness, flinging no taunts at those whose tender consciences cannot brook our modes and endeavours:—this warfare we resign to those who deem themselves to have an indefectible right to dictate measures, and denounce all who differ. One thing, however, we do assuredly crave—namely, that we be not thrust out of the harvest field, nor ranked with Socinians and Universalists, because our implements are those of our fathers, or because we cannot see through the glasses of some who have more nearly advanced towards perfection. We crave permission to dissent from any assumption, by any school or brotherhood, of exclusive usefulness, as pertaining to their sole exertions. Far be it from us to say, that they are not as much blessed in their labours as they report themselves to be; we rejoice at their success in the conversion of souls; but we ask of them to cease a warfare against the doctrine we maintain, which owes its strength to appeals to the popular ear, without scriptural argument; and no longer to stigmatize old Calvinists as men who have no seals of their ministry. Our argument in this place might be fully stated by our saying, with all humility, to every brother of all those who are so ready to denounce us: “if any man trust that he is Christ’s, let him of himself think this again, that as he is Christ’s, even so are we Christ’s.”

The men who were most useful in the church of Scotland in the early part of the seventeenth century, have not left us in doubt as to their method of interpreting the doctrines of grace. Welsh, Bullock, Rutherford, and Dickson may be seen in their printed works. It was with such men that Mr. Livingston associated; and with these he agreed. In August, 1630, he went over to Ireland, and took his place among those eminent servants of God who there founded Presbyterian institutions. These were Edward Brice of Braidisland, R. Cunningham of Holywood, John Ridge of Antrim, George Dunbar of Larne, Josiah Welsh of Templepatrick,

Robert Blair of Bangor, James Hamilton of Balleywalter, Andrew Stewart of Donagore, Henry Colwart of Oldstone, and some others.\* It need scarcely be said that the signature of articles under mental reservation had not as early as this been introduced into the Presbyterian Church: and these men had assented to the strictly Calvinistic confession which had been drawn up by Usher. "When this confession," says a writer in the excellent work to which we have alluded, "was, by the artifice and authority of Strafford, in 1634, exchanged for the thirty-nine articles of the English Church, they did not object to it; conceiving the new confession to be of the same tenor in point of doctrine as the former, though they loudly complained of the canons which were at the time introduced. And when they were obliged by the bishops to lay down their ministry and abandon the kingdom, this severity was distinctly stated to be owing, solely to their refusing to comply with the rites and government of the Church, and not to the slightest discrepancy between their doctrinal sentiments and those of the established confession. Such of these ministers as lived to reach Scotland, immediately joined the Presbyterian Church there; and rendered her most important assistance, in her successful struggles to cast off the yoke of prelacy, and return to the principles that were avowed and propagated by Knox. Several of them soon rose to be among her most influential members; and to be distinguished for their zeal and ability in vindicating the gospel from the doctrines of Arminianism, which, under the influence of the Scottish prelates, had made their way into that kingdom: and nearly all of them were members of that church when the solemn League and Covenant was drawn up and subscribed, and the Westminster Confession of Faith received and adopted, without a dissenting voice."

It was at Killinchie in Ireland that Mr. Livingston was ordained; and how truly he had the spirit of his station may appear from a statement of his own, a part of which is quoted by the Irish historian:

"That winter following I was often in great heaviness, for although the people were very teachable, yet they were generally very ignorant, and I saw no appearance of doing any good among them, yet it pleased the Lord that in a short time some of them began to understand somewhat of their condition. Not only had

\* The Orthodox Presbyterian, Vol. I. p. 26.

we public worship free of any inventions of men, but we had also a tolerable discipline; for after I had been some while among them, by the advice of the heads of families, some albeit for that charge were chosen elders, to oversee the measures of the rest, and some deacons to gather and distribute the collections. We met every week, and such as fell into notorious public scandals, we desired to come before us. Such as came were dealt with both in public and private to confess their scandal, in presence of the congregation, at the Saturday's sermon before the communion, which was celebrated twice in the year: such as would not come before us, or coming would not be convinced to acknowledge their fault before the congregation, upon the Saturday preceding the communion, their names, scandals, and impenitency were read out before the congregation, and they debarred from the communion: which proved such a terror that we found very few of that sort. We needed not to have the communion oftener, for there were nine or ten parishes within the bounds of twenty miles or little more, wherein there were godly and able ministers, and every one of these had the communion twice a year, at different times, and had two or three of the neighbouring ministers to help thereat; and most part of the religious people used to resort to the communion of the rest of the parishes. These ministers were Messrs. Robert Blair at Bangor, Robert Cunningham at Holywood, James Hamilton at Ballywater, John Ridge at Antrim, Henry Colwart at Old Stone, George Dunbar at Lern, Josiah Welsh at Temple Patriek, Andrew Stewart at Donagore; most of all these used ordinarily to meet the first Friday of every month at Antrim, where was a great and good congregation, and that day was spent in fasting and prayer, and public preaching: commonly two preached every forenoon, and two in the afternoon. We used to come together the Thursday's night before, and stayed the Friday's night after, and consulted about such things as concerned the carrying on of the work of God."—"I do not think there were more lively, and experienced Christians any where, than were there at that time in Ireland, and that in good numbers, and several of them persons of good outward condition in the world; but being lately brought in, the lively edge was not yet gone off them, and the perpetual fear that the bishops would put away their ministers, made them with great hunger wait on the ordinances. I have known them come several miles from their own houses, to communions to the Saturday's sermon; and [they] spent the whole Saturday night in several companies, sometimes a minister being with them, sometimes themselves alone, in conference and prayer, and waited on the public ordinances the whole Sabbath, and spent the Sabbath night likewise, and yet at the



Monday's sermon were not troubled with sleepiness, and so have not slept till they went home." *Life*, p. 15.

Before Mr. Livingston had been a year in his pastoral charge, he was suspended for nonconformity by the Bishop of Down. He was, however, shortly after restored, at the instance of Archbishop Usher, whom he describes as "a learned and godly man, although a bishop." In the spring of 1632 he was again suspended, and remained under this act of deposition for two years. During this period he endeavoured to minister to the spiritual wants of his people at Killinchie, but finding that even private labours could not be tolerated, he went over to Scotland, and employed himself in preaching from place to place, wherever he seemed to be called in providence. During his residence at Killinchie he informs us that his stipend never exceeded four pounds sterling a year. He paid several visits to the brethren in Ireland. In the last of these, in February 1634, he found many of the persecuted Presbyterians of Ulster disposed to emigrate to New England; and he consented to go himself as their fore-runner, in order to spy out the land. Providence hindered this by means of some delay in the arrival of his companion, so that the ship had sailed when they arrived at London. On returning to Ireland he found that he had been restored to the right of preaching, during his absence. About this same time died Josias Welsh, a grandson of Knox, and a preacher of righteousness so pungent and alarming, that he was called, in the expressive language of the day, *The cock of the conscience*. Mr. Livingston was called to witness his departure, and heard from his lips much that was edifying. Mr. Welsh was tried with sore conflicts in this hour, which led the eminent Robert Blair, whom we have named above, to say: "See how Satan nibbles at his heel, when he is going over the threshold of heaven." After a little time, when Mr. Livingston had made use of the expression VICTORY in his prayer, the dying man seized his hand, bade him pause, clapped his hands and cried out "VICTORY! VICTORY! VICTORY! *forevermore!*" and then expired.

Mr. Blair and Mr. Livingston were again deposed, within six months; but the latter continued to preach at Killinchie until the autumn of 1635. Shortly after he was excommunicated by order of the Bishop of Down. All hopes of religious liberty in Ireland having died away, he again turned his

thoughts towards America. A number of persons, among whom were several ministers, determined to set sail for New England, and having built a vessel of about 115 tons at Belfast, they held themselves in readiness to go in the spring of 1636. They did not actually sail until the month of September. The number of passengers for America was about a hundred and forty. The manner in which this design was disappointed will be best learned from the author's own words:—

“We set to sea, and for some space had a fair wind, till we were between three and four hundred leagues from Ireland, and so nearer the banks of Newfoundland, than any place of Europe; but if ever the Lord spake by his winds and dispensations, it was made evident to us, that it was not his will that we should go to New England. For we met with a mighty heavy rain out of the North-west, which did break our rudder, which we got mended, with much of our gallon head, and four cross-trees, and tore our foresail, five or six of our champlets made up a great beam under the gunner-room—door broke; seas came in over the round-house, and broke a plank or two in the deck, and wet all them that were between the decks; we sprung a-leak, that gave us seven hundred strokes in two pumps in the half-hour glass; yet we lay at hull a long time, to beat out that storm, yet we might be sure in that season of the year we would forgather with one or two more of that sort, before we could reach New England. After prayer, when we were consulting what to do, I propounded an overture, wherewith I was somewhat perplexed thereafter, viz: ‘That seeing we thought we had the Lord’s warrant for our intended voyage; howbeit it be presumption to propose a sign to him, yet we being in such a strait, and having stood out some days already; we might yet for twenty-four hours stand to it, and if in that time he were pleased to calm the storm, and send a fair wind, we might take it for his approbation of our advaneing; otherwise that he called us to return.’ To this we all agreed, but that day, and especially the night thereafter, we had the worst storm that we had seen; so that the next morning so soon as we saw day, we turned and made good way with a main course and a little of a foretopsail, and after some tossing we came at last on the third of November, to an anchor at Loeh-fergus. During all this time, amidst such fears and dangers, the most part of the passengers were very cheerful and confident. Mr. Blair was much of the time weakly, and lay in time of storm; I was sometimes sick, and then my brother M’Clellan only performed duty in the ship; several of those between the decks, being throng, weré siekly. An

aged person and one child died, and were buried in the sea. Mr. Blair was much affected with our returning, and fell in a swoon that day we turned back, and although we could not imagine what to make of that dispensation, yet we were confident that the Lord would let us see somewhat that would abundantly satisfy us. Our outward means were much impaired by this disappointment, for we had put most of our stocks in provision, and somewhat of merchandize, which we behoved to sell at low rates at our return, and had provided ourselves with some servants, for fishing and building of houses, whom we behoved to turn off. That which grieved us most was, that we were like to be a mocking to the wicked; but we found the contrary, that the prelates and their followers were much dismayed and feared at our return; but neither they nor we knew, that within a year the Lord would root the prelates out of Scotland, and after that out of England and Ireland."—*Life*, p. 23, 24, 25.

In the year 1638 we find Mr. Livingston at London, whither he had been sent with copies of the National Covenant, and letters relating to this great and interesting transaction. Upon hearing that the king had threatened to imprison him, he hastily returned to Scotland.

"I was present (says he) at Lanerk, and at several other parishes, when on a Sabbath after the forenoon sermon, the covenant was read and sworn; and may truly say, that in all my lifetime, *except one day at the kirk of Shots*, I never saw such motions from the spirit of God; all the people generally, and most willingly concurring; where I have seen more than a thousand persons all at once lifting up their hands, and the tears falling down from their eyes, so that through the whole land, except the professed Papists, and some few who for base ends adhered to the prelates, the people universally entered into the covenant of God, for reformation of religion, against prelates and ceremonies."—p. 28.

Shortly after this he was called to the pastoral charge of Stranrawer, a parish in Galloway, a few miles from Portpatrick, and therefore conveniently near to his Irish friends. Here he remained until he was, in the summer of 1648, translated "by the sentence of the General Assembly" to Ancrum in Teviotdale. Great numbers used to come over from Ireland to communions; on one occasion five hundred such persons were present. Mr. Livingston was a member of the General Assembly at Glasgow in 1638, which established the refor-

mation of religion, and of every following Assembly for twelve years, except that of 1640. In this year he was sent by order of Presbytery into England, with the earl of Cassil's regiment. His account of this enterprise assures us that "the committee of estates and general officers" were accustomed to convene with the ministers for special prayer; and he speaks of "the presbytery of the army:" so intimately was religion united with all the concerns of life.

"It was very refreshful to remark," observes Mr. Livingston, "that after we came to a quarter at night, there was nothing to be heard almost through the whole army but singing of psalms, prayer, and reading of the Scripture, by the soldiers in their several tents, and I was informed, there was large [much] more the year before, when the army lay at Dunse-law. And indeed in all our meetings and consultings, both within doors and without in the fields, always the nearer the beginning, there was so much the more of dependence upon God, and more tenderness in worship and walking, but through process of time, we still declined more and more."—p. 30.

The years following, until 1648, were years of spiritual dearth to Ireland. The rebellion and consequent disturbances laid waste many parts of that fruitful field. The ministers were deposed, banished, and superseded by hirelings: the abjuration oath was urged on the dissenters, and the sword of the rebels added new horror to their alarms. Various ministers were from time to time sent to Ireland by the Scots Assembly; and Mr. Livingston several times was one of the number. His labours were abundant, especially in 1648, and were such as nothing short of conscientious zeal could have prompted.

"For the most part of all these three months," he informs us, "I preached every day once, and twice on the Sabbath; the destitute parishes were many; the hunger of the people was become great, and the Lord was pleased to furnish otherwise than usually. I went to get at home. I came ordinarily the night before to the place where I was to preach, and commonly lodged in some religious person's house; where we were often well refreshed at family exercise. Usually I desired no more before I went to bed, but to make sure the place of Scripture I was to preach on the next day. And rising in the morning, I read four or five hours myself alone, either in the chamber or in the fields; after that we went to

church, and then dined, and then rode five or six miles, more or less, to another parish. Sometimes there would be four or five communions in several places in three months' time."—*Life*, p. 34.

It has just been observed, by anticipation, that Mr. Livingston was, in 1648, translated to Ancrum. He found the people of his new charge tractable, but ignorant, and does not speak of his labours among them with any peculiar satisfaction. The parliament and the church of Scotland determined in the ensuing year to send a commission to treat with Charles II. at the Hague. The great intent of this transaction was to extort from Charles a promise that the reformation in Scotland should be untouched, and even to procure his adhesion to the covenant. Mr. Livingston was one of the clerical members of this commission. He entered upon the business with great misgivings, arising partly from a modest sense of his own incapacity for diplomatic arts, and partly because he had suspicions of the king's sincerity, and doubted his fidelity in relation to any engagement which he might make. At this time of day, it strikes us as wonderful that these suspicions should not have set the whole Scottish nation upon their guard against this false profligate. The ministers had frequent interviews with Charles, and he carried himself, as we might readily suppose a young gallant of his wiles and expectations would do towards a committee of guileless Presbyterians. They were always received kindly, and had free access at every hour. They often urged him to state his scruples respecting the Covenant, and other parts of the treaty, but he never expressed them. From time to time, however, there were words and occurrences which led these solicitous servants of the Church to fear all that was afterwards so lamentably realized. Even on the voyage to Scotland, Mr. Livingston was not without his fears that the whole Church was egregiously trifled with by their unprincipled monarch.

"All of a sudden," says he, "on the Friday before we came ashore in Scotland, Libbertoun comes from the king and tells, that the king was ready to swear and subscribe the Covenant. This was suspiciouslike to some of us, especially seeing some other things which should have been granted before that, were not then agreed to, and that the parliament in these last instructions, had not desired the king's subscribing and swearing the Covenant, but an obligation to do it. But these other things were afterwards grant-



ed that day. And because ere we came out of Scotland, it was desired, that if the king could be moved to swear the Covenant in Holland, it should be done, the commissioners resolved that they would accept of his swearing and subscription. It was laid on me to preach the next Sabbath, when he should swear it, and to read the National Covenant and Solemn League, and take his oath; the which day also we came to anchor at the mouth of the Spey. I would gladly have put it off till we had been in Scotland, or that some of the other two ministers should preach, but all the rest pressed most earnestly, urging what a great scandal it would be; and how far honest men would be dissatisfied, if the king's offer of swearing the Covenant should be rejected. According to my softness and silliness of disposition, I was moved to agree."

Before this sermon was preached Mr. Livingston was informed that the king intended to modify the oath by certain words added to the form at the time of swearing, such as to preclude any violation of the English laws. He accordingly laid this before the commissioners, and with them went to Charles and assured him that no engagement would be received from him other than the oath already submitted and agreed to. Mr. Livingston very plainly declares his conviction that the guilt of this unadvised admission of a wicked and faithless king was chargeable not only on the commission, but the state and the church at large. In all these affairs, the good man was beyond his element: and no sooner had they disembarked than he fell behind the king and court, and never afterwards saw Charles, except to take leave of him at Dundee; where, it should be observed, he used all plainness in urging him to save them from the assault of the English.

It better suited his temper and desires to preach the gospel. Amidst these shakings of kingdoms, he was most interested for that "kingdom which cannot be moved:" and although, in common with all his nation, he had erroneous ideas respecting the necessary connexion of secular and ecclesiastical power, yet the aspect of the Church which he most loved to contemplate was that of her beauty as the bride of Christ. Thus we find him, several years after the English invasion, rejoicing in a revival of the work of God in the land. In various parts numbers were converted by the ministry of the word, and the meetings at sacramental seasons were much frequented and highly cheering. It is agreeable to our ideas of a genuine revival of religion to find such a record as this: "A motion being made at one communion, about Christians' ho-

*nouring God with their substance, the gentlemen above-named* [Sir Andrew Ker, Sir William Scot and others] with most of the ministers before mentioned, and some few other professors, agreed among themselves and subscribed to give a certain portion yearly, which came in all to fifty pounds sterling a year, and was employed only upon distressed Christians, and breeding of hopeful youth in learning.”

Darker and darker was the prospect of the Scottish Church from this time forward. Our readers can scarcely expect of us a recital of the attempts made by Charles to revive prelacy, and introduce a liturgy. It requires a high measure, even of high-church zeal, to enable any one to excuse the base and unprincipled conduct of the head of the Anglican Church. The time chosen by him for his treacherous assault was that in which Scotland was worn out by the evils of Cromwell's usurpation, and the methods used were the progeny of a subtile genius. In 1662 Mr. Livingston attended his last communion at Ancrum, and entered upon the services with a deep impression of the impending trials. The subject of his discourse was chosen with reference to the expectation of persecution; and on the twelfth of November he received notice that upon the eighteenth day of the same month, he and more than a dozen other ministers were summoned before the council. On the eleventh of December he made his appearance. They tendered to him the oath of allegiance; which he peremptorily refused, upon the ground that he could not acknowledge the king to be “supreme governor over all persons, in all causes, both civil and ecclesiastic.” Hereupon they pronounced upon him sentence of banishment; that within forty-eight hours he should leave Edinburgh, and go to the north side of the Tay, and within two months depart out of the king's dominions. In April, 1663, he arrived at Rotterdam, where he found the rest of the exiled ministers. Here he frequently preached in Scotch Churches, until he was disabled by infirmities. His death took place upon the ninth day of August, 1672. Some of his last words were these: “I die in the faith that the truths of God which he hath helped the Church of Scotland to own, shall be owned by him as truths, so long as sun and moon endure: and that Independency, though there be good men and well-meaning professors that way, will be found more to the prejudice of the work of God than many are aware of, for they evanish into vain opinions. I have had my own faults as other men, *but he made me always abhor shows.* I have,

I know, given offence to many, through my slackness and negligence, but I forgive and desire to be forgiven. I cannot say much of great services, yet if ever my heart was lifted up, it was in preaching Jesus Christ." After a pause, for he was not able to speak much at a time, he said, "I would not have people to forecast the worst, but there is a dark cloud above Reformed Churches, which prognosticates a storm coming." His wife, fearing what shortly followed, desired him to take leave of his friends; "I dare not," replied he, with an affectionate tenderness, "but it is like our parting will only be for a short time." And then he fell asleep in the Lord.

The subject of these remarks was a Presbyterian of the old school. He was a painful minister, a true-hearted patriot, and an humble believer. There is no trace of sternness nor of haughtiness in his whole history. His conscience was tender, perhaps scrupulous, yet he evinces no bitterness. Through all his life he was a valetudinarian, being afflicted from his earliest years with those nephritic complaints, which at last removed him. He tells us that he was "averse to debates, rather given to laziness than rashness, and easy to be wrought upon." He "inclined rather to solitariness than to company," and both in private and public often experienced confirmations to his heart of the Lord's goodness. As a preacher he was considered second to none of his contemporaries: yet he speaks of his performances as hasty and inaccurate. His manner of preparation was to write a few notes, and leave the enlargement to the time of delivery. Although a laborious student, he found that "much study did not so much help in preaching, as getting the heart brought into a spiritual condition." "Many a time," to use words already cited, "I found that which was suggested to me in the delivery, was more refreshful to myself, and edifying to the hearers, than what I had premeditated: yea, sometimes I thought the hunger of the hearers helped me more than my own preparation."

As it regards his progress in learning, he speaks with a modesty not unlike that of President Edwards upon the same topic:

"My memory was but weak and waterish, yet had I improved it, I might have had better use of it; for after that I came from the college, I did with no great difficulty attain to some tolerable insight in the Hebrew, Chaldee, and somewhat also of the Syriac:

the Arabic I did essay, but the vastness of it made me give over. I got also so much of the French, the Italian, and after that of the Low Dutch, that I could make use of sundry of their books; and of the Spanish and High Dutch, that I could make use of their Bibles." "Now since I came to Holland, and so had more leisure than before, when I was advising how to employ my time to some advantage, I remembered that I had spent some of my former days in the study of the Hebrew language, and had a great desire that some means might be used, that the knowledge of the only true God might be yet more plentifully had, both by ministers and professors, out of the original text, and for that cause, in as small a volume as might be, the original text of the Bible might be printed in the one column, and the several vulgar translations thereof, in the other column in several Bibles. Therefore, when I thought what Latin translation would be fit to join with the original text for a Latin Bible, I found that for the Old Testament, Junius's version varies much from the native phrase and order of the Hebrew; and Pagnin's version, as Montanus hath helped it, comes indeed near the Hebrew, but if printed and read alone, in many places yields almost no sense; therefore I thought Pagnin's own translation would be fitter to put in a column over against the Hebrew, only that it were needful that in several places it might be amended out of the later and more accurate translations. For this cause much of my time in Holland I spent in comparing Pagnin's version with the original text, and with the later translations, such as Munster's, the Tigurine, Junius, Diodati, the English, but especially the Dutch, which is the latest and most accurate translation; being encouraged therein, and having the approbation of Voetius, Essénius, Nethenus, and Leusden; and so through the whole Old Testament wrote some emendations on Pagnin's translation."—Page 57.

In concluding this essay, we shall give some account of a discourse which we have mentioned above; and which was delivered upon the occasion of Mr. Livingston's last communion at Ancrum, on Monday, October 13th, 1662. All that we can here furnish is a sketch from the notes of an inaccurate stenographer. In this mere outline, however, we may observe the tenderness of his conscience, the ingenious tact with which he illustrates truth, and the courage with which he resists innovation.

After reading to them Matthew x. 32. "Whosoever shall confess me before men," &c., he adds,



“There are two main ways whereby Satan prevails over poor creatures; sometimes he allures, and at other times he terrifies them. There are the lusts of the flesh, and the love of the world and of honour. These engines have a kind of enticing quality, and if they fail, he bends up terrors and maketh them afraid. Now, as an antidote against all these, our Lord holds forth the words which we have used; and because many are ready to find out strange ways to save themselves, their means, and their life, he propones it very sharply, ‘Whosoever denieth me before men, him will I deny,’ &c. Now this is the most ticklish point in all divinity, and the rock on which many beat out their brains. Satan waylays people, and enticeth them to deny Jesus Christ; and alas that his influence is so great in the time wherein we live.

“Some think if it were Jesus Christ, and if it were a fundamental point they were called to confess, they would stand for it with life and estate; but it is thought that Christians now stand upon some things that are but fancies and nice scrupulosities, and if there be any thing in them, it is but a small matter. And shall a man venture his life and all upon a small thing? Well, if they be none of *Christ’s* small things, let them go: but if they be one of his truths, will ye call that a small thing? His small things are very great things. It might be proved to you, that there never was a controversy since the beginning of the world, even touching the most momentous truths, that was not accounted a small thing, while it was an occasion of trial; and that the thing which is now become an occasion of trial to many, is no less than the free exercise of the kingly office of Jesus Christ, in the discipline and government of his house. But some of you will say, This is but a matter of discipline and government, and why need we make so great ado about this? For silencing such objections let us use this comparison. A gardener is appointed to keep his master’s garden, and after a while he casts down the rails and hedges about the same. His master challenges him for doing so; the other answers, I have not meddled with your fruit trees, your flowers, nor your herbs; I have only cast down the fences, and that is but a small thing. You possibly reckon it so, says his master, but in doing that small thing, you open a gap for the beasts to come in and spoil all. Our blessed Lord Jesus was of another mind, when he said, The faithful servant is faithful in a little, and if it be a small thing, the servant that is faithful in it doth thereby testify his love to his master, as much as in a greater matter. Take another similitude. A tenant, in his master’s absence, doth, upon the entreaty of his neighbour tenant, give him a butt or a half a ridge of ground; and when, at his master’s return, he is challenged for suffering the other to change his march



stone, he answers, it is but a small thing, Sir, and ye have ground enough besides. Would his master accept that answer of his hand? Satan always shapes a trial, and puts it to such a frame as he can draw to a small point, and set it, as ye use to say, *in aciem novaculi*, 'like a razor's edge;' so that many think there is little between the two; and yet the one side is a denying of Christ, and the other a confessing him. It may be, you that are the people think the ministers too peremptory in these days, and that we might go on some length, that ye and we might abide together; it seems, say you, that we care little for you, when we will not yield somewhat. The Lord knows whether or not we have love to you, and that we could do any thing in our power for your welfare; but we dare not exceed our instructions.—But perhaps you will say, 'May not ministers be silent? What need have they to endanger their ministry, their family, and every thing else, by speaking things that they had better forbear? Can they not hold themselves satisfied with preaching faith and repentance?' In so far my friends you say well. Faith and repentance are very comprehensive duties; and I confess I never delighted to hear a man, the most of whose preaching is what they call, on the public, and meddling with state matters. But there are times and seasons wherein a man's silence may bring a curse upon his head. As suppose there is a besieged city, and a watchman with a guard set at the west port, with a commission to sound the trumpet whenever he seeth any danger; according as it is in Nehemiah iv. and in the third and thirty-third chapter of Ezekiel. Well, he seeth the enemy coming on; but instead of holding by his instructions, he marches all his force to the east port, which is the far stronger, and where there is no imminent danger. There he stands, where there is none to oppose him, and in the meantime the station he was placed in is deserted, and the enemy comes in as a flood. Just so it is with the man who will preach only against popery, and meddle with no other controversies; and it may be, if popery come along, as indeed we have reason to believe it will be the next trial, then he will preach you good moral doctrine. Now, can the man who believes so, be accounted faithful? *Or can he look for a glad sight of Jesus Christ on his death-bed?*"

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A Letter to the Rev. Joel Hawes, D. D. on Dr. Taylor's Theological Views. From "Views in Theology." No. X. for May, 1832. pp. 49. New York.

Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion, derived from the literal fulfilment of prophecy, particularly as illustrated by the history of the Jews, and by the discoveries of recent travellers. By Rev. Alexander Keith. From the 6th Edinburgh edition. pp. 284. 12mo. New York.

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Rosenkranz, Encyclopadie der theolog. Wissenschaften. Halle.

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Dr. George Campbell's Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence, with Fenelon's Dialogues on Eloquence. Edited by Professor Ripley, of the Newton Theological Institution. Boston.

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## BIBLICAL AND PHILOLOGICAL.

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The Biblical Cabinet, or Hermeneutical, Exegetical and Philological Library. Edited by Rev. C. H. Terrot, late Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. [Designed to embrace a series of translations of the best German Theologians.] Vol. I. containing Ernesti's Principles of Biblical Interpretation. Edinburgh.

A new Greek and English Lexicon, principally on the plan of the Greek and German Lexicon of Schneider. By James Donnegan, M. D. First American, from the second London edition, revised and enlarged. By R. B. Patton. pp. 1413. Boston.

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Matter, Histoire Universelle de l'Eglise Chretienne. 3 vols.

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Planck, Geschichte der protestantische Theologie. Gottingen.

Locherer, Geschichte der Christl. Relig. und Kirche.

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