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THE  
BIBLICAL REPERTORY.

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JULY, 1834.

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No. III.

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REVIEW.

*Archibald Alexander*

ART. I.—*The Case of the Dissenters, in a Letter addressed to the Lord Chancellor.* Fifth edition, London.

AT present, no subject excites a deeper interest in Great Britain, than that of church-reform. The success which attended the late effort to promote a civil reform in the constitution of the empire, has not satisfied the friends of liberty and equal rights, but has rather stimulated and encouraged them, to render their work perfect, by extending the reform to the ecclesiastical establishment of the nation. It is a singular, and we believe, an anomalous fact, in the history of the world, that three different forms of Christianity should be established by law in the same empire; so that he who in England enjoys the privileges of a member of the established church, in Scotland is subjected to all the privations and inconveniences of a Dissenter; and, *vice versa*, the legitimate member of the Scotch establishment is a Dissenter as soon as he crosses the Tweed. But in Canada, Roman Catholics, who are barely tolerated in Great Britain, enjoy the patronage and favour of the Government.

As the bulk of American readers have a very imperfect knowledge of the history and present condition of that large body of British subjects, who conscientiously dissent from some things in the established church of England; and as the merits of the important question which is now agitated in that country, has not, to our knowledge, been exhibited in any publication, on this side the Atlantic, we judge it to be expedient, to lay before our readers, "THE CASE OF THE DISSENTERS" entire; or if any thing be omitted, it will be something which can have no bearing on the general argument. The writer of this sensible and decorous pamphlet, is now in this country; and as far as an opportunity has been afforded to become acquainted with him, has conciliated the high regard of the good and intelligent. He is certainly a writer of no mean abilities, and it will be difficult for any one to find a flaw in the arguments by which he ingeniously and strongly sustains the high claims of the Dissenters. The only doubt which can be entertained in this country, is, whether it would be safe to make at once so great a change, as would be the effect of obtaining all that they ask for, and to which, abstractly, they have an undoubted right.

Previously to our laying "the case" before our readers, we propose to furnish them with a rapid sketch of the history, and present condition of the English Dissenters.

It is known to all, that the English Reformers did not proceed so far in throwing off the yoke of Popish ceremonies, as other branches of the Protestant church. And it is also well known to our readers, that a large body of the most pious and conscientious persons in the kingdom, were scrupulous about many things contained in the liturgy and book of common prayer; and that this dissatisfaction continued to increase and spread, until a majority of the nation became ripe for a reform. The persons, who entertained these opinions, were called Puritans, or Nonconformists.

During the bloody reign of Queen Mary, many of the most distinguished leaders of the English Reformation took refuge in Germany, Geneva, and Switzerland. Here they had the opportunity of observing the simplicity and purity of that form of worship and discipline, which had been introduced into the Reformed churches on the continent of Europe, by the celebrated Calvin. But while some of the British theologians became the zealous admirers of the simplicity of the worship of these churches, others were of opinion that by them the principles of the Reformation were pushed too far; and they still adhered with pertinacity, to the liturgy of the English church, as it had been established in the reign of Edward VI. Hence arose an

unhappy dispute among the exiles, which on both sides was conducted with an unbecoming warmth and asperity; and which eventuated in the separation of the parties. The principal seat of this controversy was Frankfort, where a large number of these persecuted men had found a hospitable asylum. Upon the decease of Mary, when Elizabeth ascended the throne, these exiles had the opportunity of returning, and the parties who had contended so furiously when in a foreign country, were not likely to cease from contention when they came home. Accordingly, both aimed at getting their own views received and established by the supreme power of the nation. Elizabeth was altogether inclined to favour those who wished to retain the ceremonies which had been permitted to remain in the time of Edward, her brother; and Parker, who was her prime counsellor in ecclesiastical affairs, was a zealous patron of ceremony and pomp, in the worship of God. No indulgence, therefore, was shown to those who could not be reconciled to Popish dresses, and superstitious ceremonies. Thus, a large number of the most pious and learned of the British Reformers were excluded from the church by the establishment of rules and forms, to which they could not conscientiously conform. These, after a while, began to meet in separate assemblies, and to conduct divine worship agreeably to their own views. At first there seems to have been little controversy about church government; the difference between presbyters and bishops was not considered, even by most of the dignitaries of the English church, as of divine appointment, but was defended as an expedient ecclesiastical arrangement, calculated to preserve peace and promote unity; and in this view the Puritans, for some time, were willing to submit to Episcopal government, if those parts of the liturgy which were objectionable should be removed. But it was not long before the Brownists arose, from whom proceeded the Independents. Their distinguishing tenet was, that every distinct church possessed in itself all the powers of self-government, independently of all other churches; although they did not deny, that sister churches should cultivate friendly intercourse, and might counsel and advise one another.

As soon as the Brownists had, under the guidance of their leader, organized a visible society upon their own plan, they became the objects of persecution in that intolerant age; and entertaining no prospect of enjoying peace and liberty in their native country, the whole congregation manifested the sincerity of their religious principles, by emigrating in a body to Holland. Here, however, unhappy dissensions arose in the congregation of Brown; several of the leading men, and some of the most

learned, separated from their brethren, and formed another church, according to their own plan. But the most extraordinary fact in the history of the Brownists is, that their founder and leader, Robert Brown, forsook them, returned to England, and lived the remainder of his life in the communion of the established church. But the new sect found a much more excellent leader in Mr. Robinson, who formed an Independent congregation at Leyden, and adopting more liberal views than were first entertained by the society, has been commonly considered as the founder of the Independents, as distinguished from the Brownists; but it does not appear that he made any material alteration in the system. Mr. Robinson finding that his congregation was in danger of becoming amalgamated with the natives of the country, by frequent intermarriages, formed the bold enterprise of removing with his people to the wilds of North America. He himself, it is true, never reached this country; for remaining behind to settle some matters of importance, his valuable life was cut short; but the congregation arrived at Plymouth in Massachusetts, in the year 1620, where they formed the germ of the Puritan colonies in America.

It is not to be understood, however, that all the Independents emigrated to Holland. A church was formed in London as early as 1592, in Nicholas-lane, and they increased so rapidly throughout the kingdom, that in the 35th year of Elizabeth, Sir Walter Raleigh said in parliament, "that there are now twenty thousand of these men." They were, however, harassed by unceasing persecutions, and while many of them were cast into prison, a few sealed their testimony with their blood.

Before the rise of the Independents in England, the Puritans, as we have seen, had adopted the ideas of Calvin about church discipline and public worship; but hoping for a change in the established church, they did not immediately form separate congregations. The first church on Presbyterian principles was formed at Wandsworth 1572, by a Mr. Field, minister of the place. Soon, however, churches of this description were multiplied in most parts of England; so that before the close of Elizabeth's reign, the Presbyterians are said to have amounted to a hundred thousand persons. Many of these also, were driven from their native land by the intolerance of government. They followed the Independents across the Atlantic, but settled for the most part in the middle and southern colonies. These emigrants were the founders of the Presbyterian church in the United States, which has now grown to be so large a body, that it embraces more than a hundred Presbyteries. It may be remarked, in this place, that the Presbyterian theory of church

government has never been carried fully into practice in England, although the system now in force in Scotland and America, was composed and perfected by the Westminster Assembly of Divines, and adopted by the parliament. In the earlier stages of their existence, the Presbyterians were so oppressed, and so scattered through the kingdom, that they had not the opportunity of holding regular Synods; and the restoration of Charles II. put an end to the power given them by the parliament, before there was time to establish the system to any considerable extent. It is a remarkable fact, however, that the Westminster Assembly, although the whole of the English members had received ordination from the hands of bishops, and had been educated in the established church, yet with a few exceptions, concurred in the adoption of a Presbyterian system of church government. We will not attempt in this place, to give the character of this venerable assembly; although we may be permitted in passing, to say, that in our opinion, no more venerable and learned an assembly has met, in any country, since the days of the apostles.

Here is the proper place to remark, that during the disorders of the civil wars, while the king and parliament were contending by force of arms for the supremacy, a multitude of sects arose in England, characterized for the most part, by a wild spirit of enthusiasm; but as many of these were ephemeral, and have left no vestige of their existence, except on the page of history, we shall pass them by without further notice. But during this period, two sects arose, which are still conspicuous among the Dissenters of England. The first was the denomination of Baptists; the other the Quakers. There were indeed some Anabaptists in England during the reign of Edward VI. who had fled from Germany on account of the rustic war. These, however, were persecuted with unrelenting rigour; and in the reign of Elizabeth, they were, by proclamation of the government, banished. They then fled to Holland. But the respectable denomination of English Baptists, though holding some tenets in common with the Anabaptists of Germany, ought not to be confounded with them. The first regular Baptist church formed in England, was made by a division of the church of Mr. Jacob, and was constituted under the pastoral care of Mr. John Spilsbury, according to Crosby, their historian. Since that time they have advanced rapidly, and now form a very respectable part of the body of Dissenters.

The Quakers were at first characterized by a wild, fanatical zeal; but they soon settled down into an orderly and well governed society. Their increase at first was rapid; but for the

last half century their numbers in England have rather diminished than increased. It must be remembered, however, that a very large portion of the sect emigrated to Pennsylvania, under the auspices of William Penn; and this cis-atlantic part of the society has flourished exceedingly, and continued a united and harmonious body, until the late division, which has severed the society into nearly two equal parts.

As the restoration of Charles II. was brought about mainly through the influence of the Presbyterians, into whose hands the power of the government had fallen, they fully expected that such a plan of the church would be adopted, as would comprehend them, without a violation of their consciences. But in this expectation they were sadly disappointed, and the unprincipled monarch added to all his other crimes, that of the basest ingratitude towards the men who had exerted themselves most effectively in bringing him back to his throne and kingdom. In a short time after the restoration, such rigid principles of high-churchism, and such intolerant principles towards all who refused a complete conformity, were adopted, that in one day, about two thousand of the most learned, and most pious ministers in England, were ejected from their places; and these men, who had spent their lives in the faithful preaching of the Gospel, were now forbidden even to meet for worship with a few of their neighbours, and were prosecuted often, for having a few friends collected in their own houses in time of family worship. And not only so, but they were prohibited upon the severest penalties, from approaching within five miles of any incorporated town. Never, perhaps, was any persecution more wanton, and characterized by more impiety than this; for while these learned and pious men were driven out to starve, and prohibited from instructing the people, there were no competent teachers to supply their places. Such men, as Baxter, Owen, Manton, Flavel, Henry, and a host of others, of like character, were pursued as if they had been thieves or robbers, dragged to the unrighteous courts as criminals, and subjected to imprisonment and heavy mulcts, while the means of comfortable subsistence were taken away. Their only opportunity of exercising the ministry which they had received, was commonly in the dead hour of the night, or in some retired spot; where, however, they were often interrupted and dispersed by the unceremonious intrusion of constables and bailiffs.

The only relief which the non-conformists obtained, in the reign of James II. was owing to a cause which they could not approve. This monarch being a devoted and avowed Papist, sought to have the laws against Popish recusants relaxed, intend-



ing, as soon as it could be done, to overthrow the Protestant establishment, and to re-establish the supreme dominion of the Pope in England. While prosecuting this object, without a grain of affection for the Dissenters, he found it convenient, for the sake of appearances, to extend indulgence to these sufferers also. It is to their honour, that they preferred to remain in a state of oppression, rather than that the Papists should again be restored to power; and during this critical period of the church, the Dissenters came forward, in conjunction with the divines of the establishment, in opposition to Popery. But this danger was soon over. The revolution of 1688, which drove the family of Stuart from the English throne, and brought in William III., relieved the Dissenters from the most oppressive of their burdens. The act of toleration was passed, by which the severe laws against Dissenters were—not repealed—but suspended, on certain conditions, with which they were required to comply; and by a subscription to the doctrinal articles of the church, they were permitted to exercise their ministry in houses duly licensed. But by the test-act, they were still excluded from all offices, civil and military, and were also excluded from the Universities, in order to be admitted to which, such oaths and subscriptions were required, as no Dissenter could conscientiously submit to. They were also still subjected to the same necessity of paying tithes and church rates, as though they attended the established churches.

Although the Dissenters were still left under many civil disabilities, they were glad to obtain toleration upon any terms which did not commit their consciences. They, therefore, were grateful for the privileges conferred on them by the act of toleration, and did not complain of the injustice which, as British subjects, they still suffered, on account of the deprivation of their rights. Their principal controversial writings, in relation to this subject, were purely in self-defence, intended to show that they had sufficient reasons for dissent from many things required by the established church. But for a long time; they made no effort to obtain an improvement of their condition; but seemed to be well satisfied as long as they should be permitted to enjoy the toleration which had been granted. The prejudices against the Dissenters, which had been virulent while the house of Stuart held the reins of government, were greatly diminished under the house of Hanover. Instead of being considered as the enemies of the government, they now began to be regarded among its firmest friends. In consequence of their improved condition, their numbers and congregations increased rapidly. But from the year 1730 until 1760 a great declension

took place among the Dissenters, as appears from pamphlets published by Gough, Orton, and Dr. Doddridge. The principal cause of this declension is said to have been the introduction and prevalence of Arminian and Arian errors. About this time also, many of the younger preachers of the Dissenters went over to the established church: as many as thirty names are given of ministers who pursued this course. These declensions and errors were principally confined to the Presbyterian branch of the dissenting body; but this cannot be ascribed in any degree to the nature of Presbyterian government. The truth is, that genuine Presbyterianism has not existed among the Dissenters called by that name in England. If the discipline of Presbyterianism had been in force, it would have been a barrier in the way of error; but there, as in this country, a spurious liberality prevailed, and communion was freely held with ministers who rejected some of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel. It is difficult, however, to assign a satisfactory reason for the remarkable difference between the Independent and Presbyterian congregations, in regard to orthodoxy. It cannot be accounted for by a reference to their ecclesiastical polity; for in this country the very contrary has been the fact; for while Unitarianism has prevailed among the Congregationalists, it has scarcely found an entrance into any branch of the Presbyterian church in America.

But it is time that we should notice some sects of Dissenters, that arose long after those already mentioned. The chief of these is the large and increasing body to which the name of Methodists has been given. The origin and history of this powerful society is so recent, that it will be unnecessary to enter into much detail. Those denominated Calvinistic Methodists do not properly come into the account, as they have never been completely separated from the established church; and as long as Mr. John Wesley lived, the numerous societies under his authority received the sacraments from ordained ministers of the church of England; but since his decease, the Wesleyan Methodists, and those who have separated from them, have effected a complete separation from the establishment, and are now, to all intents and purposes, Dissenters. The separation between the Calvinistic and Arminian Methodists took place, A. D. 1741, when a difference arose between the two great founders of Methodism, respecting certain points of doctrine; but in the year 1750, this breach was in some measure healed; but except Lady Huntington's connexion, the Calvinistic Methodists never formed any thing like a regular sect. Whitefield always set himself in opposition to sectarian measures. They had, however,

many distinct places of worship, which were frequented by numerous audiences, and as far as we know, this is still the fact, in London and some other places.

The Wesleyan Methodists, when their connexion with the church of England was completely dissolved, fell into difficulty in regard to toleration; for their ministers could not conscientiously make the declaration required of Dissenters by the act of toleration; that is, they were not conscientiously scrupulous about those rites and practices to which the Dissenters objected; and some who were inimical to the society, actually began to put in force against them the old laws which had been long obsolete by the operation of the act of toleration. This led the society, now grown large and respectable, to apply to ministers for a special act to protect their members from persecution. This law was carried through parliament by Mr. Percival, when prime minister, and secures for the Methodist society privileges fully as ample as those enjoyed by other Dissenters; and, indeed, by this act all Dissenters are placed, in some respects, in a more favourable situation than by the act of toleration.

The Moravians, or "the Unity of Evangelical Brethren," are also Dissenters, and have several congregations in England, but their number is too small to require any further notice; but in one respect they stand in a relation to the established church which other denominations of Dissenters do not. Their bishops are acknowledged to be apostolical bishops, and consequently their ordinations are not repeated, as is the case when other dissenting ministers join the church of England.

We have not spoken of the Unitarians as a distinct body, because for a long time they were identified with those called Presbyterians; but of late, the latter name seems to have fallen much into desuetude, and the former to be commonly adopted by both Arians and Socinians.

There are also several small sects, such as the Sandemanians, Swedenborgians, &c. whose numbers and influence are too inconsiderable to render it proper to notice them in this brief historical sketch.

We do not find, that after the revolution, when the Dissenters obtained toleration, any effort was made for an improvement of their condition, until the year 1772; at which time a bill was introduced into the House of Commons, the object of which was to release the Dissenters from the obligation of subscribing the doctrinal articles of the church of England, which was required by the act of toleration. This bill, after passing the lower house by a considerable majority, was contemptuously thrown out by the House of Lords, not more than thirty of the peers voting in its

favour; and the next year it met with the same fate; for after passing almost unanimously in the House of Commons, it was again rejected by the Lords. But in the year 1779, the same bill as to its essential provisions, passed through both Houses with very inconsiderable opposition. In the place of subscription to doctrinal articles, this law required dissenting ministers to make a declaration that they were Christians and Protestants, and received the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as the revealed will of God, and as the rule of their doctrine and practice.

As the reasons for making such a change applied only to such dissenting ministers, as had departed from the doctrines of the Reformation, many conscientious, orthodox men judged it to be wrong, to join in the application to parliament for this relief; but the majority were of opinion that all men ought to enjoy liberty of conscience; and others maintained, that any subscription to articles of faith exacted by the Government was unlawful, even if believed to be true. Many pamphlets were published while this subject was under discussion, in which much variety of sentiment appears.

The Dissenters, encouraged by their success in obtaining a release from subscription in 1779, were emboldened in the year 1787, to apply to parliament, for the repeal of the corporation and test acts; but in this they were unsuccessful; a majority appearing against them, even in the House of Commons. Not discouraged, however, they had the proposal again brought forward in 1789, when Mr. Fox advocated their cause in a powerful speech; but Lord North and Mr. Pitt opposed it in every stage. Much greater efforts were now made by the Dissenters than on any former occasion. Pamphlets, almost innumerable, were printed and circulated, and public meetings were held, and resolutions passed; but these proceedings stirred up a spirit of opposition, and a powerful re-action took place; the result was, that the motion was lost. Among the speakers against the repeal of these acts, besides Pitt and Lord North, Burke, and Wilberforce exerted themselves with effect.

The Dissenters were much disappointed and chagrined at the result of this application to parliament; but the spirit of liberty was more increasingly diffused through their congregations, and they would not desist from their efforts to obtain the repeal of oppressive laws; therefore, in 1789, an attempt was made in the house of Lords to obtain the repeal of those statutes which inflict penalties on persons who absent themselves from the service of the church of England, or who speak in derogation of the Book of Common Prayer; but this motion, introduced by Lord Stanhope,

failed of success; for the bishops considered it to be a direct attack on the church, and calculated to open wide a door for irreligion.

Again in 1792, an attempt was made to obtain a repeal of those penal statutes, which still hung over the heads of those who impugned the doctrine of the Trinity. Mr. Fox, ever the friend of religious liberty, again appeared, as the advocate of Dissenters; and again, Mr. Pitt exerted his mighty influence in opposition to the motion; grounding his arguments on the unsuitableness of the time, as the public mind was exceedingly disturbed by the extraordinary political events which were taking place on the continent. The motion of Mr. Fox was lost by a considerable majority. No other effort was made by the Dissenters to better their condition for a number of years, but an attempt was made in parliament, during this period, to have some alterations made in the act of toleration, the effect of which would have been to abridge the privileges of Dissenters; but it did not succeed. The object was to restrict the liberty of preaching the Gospel, and seems to have been intended to prevent Methodists and Dissenters from preaching in the fields and villages.

Within a few years past, however, the Dissenters made a combined and successful effort to obtain relief from the oppression of the odious test-act; the worst feature in which was the profanation of the holy sacrament of the eucharist, by requiring all persons who took office, civil or military, to partake of this holy ordinance, as a prerequisite qualification. Thus, infidel statesmen, and profane and licentious officers in the army, were tempted to bow with hypocritical devotion at the sacred altar of the Most High. It is, indeed, wonderful, that a law so unrighteous, and leading to such profanation of holy things, should have so long stood its ground, while the light of religious liberty was so generally diffused among the people. But to the honour of the British legislature, the act for its repeal now passed both Houses by large majorities.

When men of intelligence and religion came to understand their rights, nothing but the hand of hard necessity will induce them to be contented under their deprivation: and success in the achievement of one victory over the unrighteous principles of oppression, only serves to encourage them to make new efforts for the recovery of such as may be withheld. It might, perhaps, have been expected by the Government, and the friends of the established church, that the Dissenters would have remained quiet and contented, after obtaining an exemption from the operation of penal laws, the repeal of which they had long

sought in vain. But if such expectations were entertained by any part of the community, they have not been realized. Instead of acquiescence under the civil disabilities which still remain, they have come forward with a zeal and firm determination, never equalled at any former period; and have demanded from the Government, not exemption from this and that burden, but a full participation of the privileges and immunities of British subjects. They have put in their claim to an equal freedom of access to the universities, as other citizens. They have also demanded that the right of burial in the parish cemeteries should no longer be withheld, and that their marriages, celebrated by their own clergymen, should be admitted to registration in the same manner as marriages solemnized by clergymen of the church of England. But they have at length ventured boldly to occupy ground never taken by the Dissenters before; and which, until lately, as a body, they were never disposed to take. They now, with reason and justice on their side, but whether with prudence and sound policy remains to be proved, complain "*That they are compelled to contribute towards a church from which they have withdrawn, and from which they derive no benefit.*" And not only have they proceeded thus far, but they now boldly demand, that one denomination of religionists should not by the State be preferred to another. In short, the present aim of the Dissenters is to have the union between church and state dissolved, and religion left free from state interference or control, as in this country. Their object is, in short, that all laws by which a particular religion is patronized and established, be repealed.

In regard to these demands, the existing ministry have lent a favourable ear to some of them; and already the universities are thrown open to Dissenters: but they appear determined to oppose their higher claims. Already the Lord Chancellor, hitherto the fearless advocate of the rights of Dissenters, has protested in the strongest terms against the project of overthrowing the establishment; and unless the Dissenters have actually become a majority of the nation, there is no hope of their success at present. But undoubtedly the struggle will be violent, and the agitation great.

That our readers may be able to form some judgment of the strength of the Dissenters in England, we will now give a summary of the number of their congregations, taken from the last volume of "*Bogue and Bennett's History of the Dissenters;*" to which work we acknowledge our obligations, for much that is contained in this historical sketch.

In England, the number of dissenting congregations is 1583,

and in Wales 419, making a sum total of 2002. Of these 252, in England, are denominated Presbyterians; 799 Independents; 532 Baptists.

In Wales, the Presbyterians are no more than 18; the Independents 225; the Baptists 176.

Besides these, there are upwards of 20 congregations of Scotch Seceders, besides those connected with the established church of Scotland.

The General, or Arminian Baptists, and the Sandemanians, are included in the summary of the Baptist congregations. Of the former, the number is about 100; of the latter probably not more than 20.

The Quakers are not included in the above summary. Their number is calculated to be about 20,000, and is rather diminishing than increasing; but they are in the possession of much wealth and intelligence. The Moravians are not an increasing body in England. Of all sects, they have the least of a proselyting spirit. Their noble aim is the conversion of the heathen, and therefore they take no pains to bring over other denominations of Christians to join their society. The number of their congregations is no more than 16; and most of these are probably small.

Now when we consider that the number of parishes belonging to the established church in England and Wales, is upwards of 10,000, the number of Dissenters, amounting to no more than two or three thousand congregations, bears apparently a small proportion to the whole body of the established church. But there are several things to be here taken into the account. It may be calculated, that most of the Dissenters are people who have some conscientious regard to religion, as they can have no reason for continuing to be Dissenters, except their conscientious attachment to their own principles of religion; whereas multitudes in England, as well as in this country, pay scarcely any attention to religion, and care nothing about it. The Dissenters are mostly from the middle class of society, which is the bone and sinew of the country. The higher classes have never been, as a body, remarkable for religion, and the vast mass which contains the dregs of the people, are, in England especially, utterly irreligious, and seldom or never attend any public worship. So that if you compare the Dissenters with the population which frequents the parish churches, the difference will not be so immense, as it would seem from the comparison of numbers in the foregoing statement. Many of the parish churches are rather nominal than real places of worship. Their income is too small to support a curate; and in many places the Dissenters have

drawn to themselves nearly all the people. In some large districts of London, there are six to one, of those who are in the habit of attending public worship, attached to the chapels of the Dissenters. And taking the immense population of this grand emporium, it is believed, that the Dissenters form a majority of those who pay any regard to religion.

It is deemed best to give "THE CASE OF THE DISSENTERS," which is here published, with very little curtailment; that our readers may fully understand the reasons on which they depend in support of their claims.



THE CASE OF THE DISSENTERS IN A LETTER ADDRESSED TO  
THE LORD CHANCELLOR.

*My Lord,*—Permit me to hope, that, in addressing this communication to your Lordship, your office will redeem me from the charge of obtrusiveness, and that your liberality will secure, for the brief statement, a candid and just consideration.

It is quite evident to all that the time is come, when the reform so happily effected in our civil institutions, must be carried into our ecclesiastical polity. It is equally evident, that this has happened, without any movement on the part of the Dissenters; for hitherto, with the exception of Scotland, they have been both silent and still. They may have memorialized the ministers on some particular evil; but they have declined to publish even such memorial to the world. At this moment their whole case is neither before the public nor the Government. Many may blame them for not having spoken *earlier*; none can blame them for speaking *now*. It is a crisis they have not made; it is a crisis they must not neglect.

It has indeed been said, that the reform of the church belongs to churchmen only, and that it would be mere impertinence in the Dissenter to interfere. To this objection I readily yield, so far as to admit, that we have nothing to do with any question affecting the church, *except as it affects ourselves*. But such is the relative position of the two interests, that it will be exceedingly difficult, in any one instance, to regard them separately. If indeed the Episcopal church could be considered only as a *religious institution* for the *spiritual welfare* of the people, other denominations could have no more right to interfere with it, than it would have to interfere with them. It might have any number of bishops; it might command any measure of property; it might adopt any methods of advancement and of usefulness; and the Dissenter would have nothing to do with it, ex-



cept to desire for it increasing peace and prosperity. But it is a *national* church; it is established on the fiction of claiming every subject of the State as a member of itself; it asserts its right when it has lost its power to enforce it; it exacts recognition and contribution from those who claim to be independent; it refuses to acknowledge a dissenting ministry, or a dissenting church; and it places the Dissenter uniformly in a state of comparative subjection, and of decided inferiority.

That the Dissenters have patiently endured these evils, while there was no remedy for them, is to their praise; if they should choose to endure them a moment longer, it would be to their disgrace. They are not unmindful of that consideration, which from time to time has enlarged their privileges; and they are especially grateful for the efforts of those noble-minded men who felt for their wrong, though they did not suffer by it, and who gave themselves no rest till the Test and Corporation Acts were expunged from the statute-book of the realm; but still they are not satisfied. No, my Lord, the Dissenters are not satisfied—they *cannot* be satisfied with their present position. They claim the *equality* of citizens. They do not ask to be placed above the churchman; they cannot submit to be placed beneath him. They claim, that no man shall be the worse, either in *purse*, *reputation*, or *privilege*, on the account of his religious opinions. This is what they seek. They will be grateful for any grant that may improve their condition—WITH THIS ALONE CAN THEY BE SATISFIED.

Allow me to refer the attention of your Lordship to some of those particulars, which unite to destroy this equality; and which, on this account, fall properly under the denomination of *grievances*.

I. The first thing which may be named is *the state of the registration*. The Dissenter, on the one hand, has been shut out from the parochial registry, except at the price of conformity; and, on the other hand, his own registry, which was forced upon him, has been discredited and rejected, so as to prevent the confidence of the people. The evil, however, of wanting an authorized evidence of birth is sometimes so great, as to induce many parents to sacrifice their consistency rather than expose their children to it, at some distant time. Great numbers have been tempted to trouble their consciences by declining the sacrament of baptism in their own community, where it is administered as they approve, and by submitting their offspring to it under a form to which they object; while others, who have had too much respect for their pastor and the community with which they were united to slight the institution of their own church, have pre-

sented their children in both communions for baptism ; but with very different objects before them. In their own church they sought for baptism and disregarded the registry ; in the national church they sought for registration, and submitted to baptism only as a form necessary to its attainment. It is proper under any circumstances to condemn such conduct, as a profanation of sacred things to secular purposes ; but it is yet more proper to condemn *the system* under which persons, who have too much conscience to neglect the means of religion, have nevertheless too little to resist the powerful temptations it presents to them.

The truth is, as your Lordship is well aware, that our whole system of registration is bad ; and it is so, in relation to the churchman as well as to the Dissenter. Our registry of baptism, either in church or chapel, is no legal evidence of *birth*, nor can it be ; it is proof of baptism and of nothing more. But, in all serious questions of law, what is wanted is evidence of birth and not of baptism. In the want of this, defective evidence has, at one time, been received, rather than expose the innocent to injury ; but, at other times, that defective evidence has been disallowed, and the party concerned has been left without a remedy.

For the sake then, not of a party, but of the commonwealth, we require to have the registration of the country placed on a simple and uniform basis. It should be a *civil*, and not a religious institution. It should embrace entries of birth, marriage, and death, by uniform methods. The duty should be discharged by a civil functionary in each parish or district ; a copy of the entries made in each parish should be forwarded monthly or quarterly to county courts ; and these again should transfer, at given periods, a copy of their entries to a *central* or *ultimate* court in the metropolis.

II. Another head of grievance by which the Dissenters suffer, is the *present state of the marriage law*. The English Church, in common with all protestant bodies, professes to acknowledge only two sacraments ; but in reality marriage has with her, as fully as with the Roman Church, the form and place of a sacrament. It is adopted with little variation from the mother church ; and it is so open to objection, from its superstitious and indelicate character, that few clergymen commit themselves to the use of the whole service. To this form, however, the Dissenters must submit. Although they have withdrawn from the church ; although the State has sanctioned them in so doing ; although they evince their sincerity by considerable daily sacrifices ; in this instance they must still conform. They must virtually, and for the occasion, profess themselves members of a community from which they have conscientiously separated ; or they must forego

all the sweetest relations of life. This imposition is the more galling, because it falls on the English Dissenter only; and it is still more so, because he was once as free to seek the privilege at the hands of his own pastor, as is the Nonconformist now in Scotland and in Ireland.

I am aware, my Lord, that this subject has been supposed to be encumbered with many difficulties; but I confess I perceive none, except what arise from the jealousy and intermeddling natural to a dominant church. Marriage is either a civil or a religious rite; or it is both. If it is civil, it belongs to the magistrate and not to the clergyman; if it is religious, then it belongs properly to the acknowledged pastor of the party using it: if it is composed of both, then it should be divided between the civil functionary and the pastor. Among the Dissenters it is, I believe, generally regarded as purely a *civil contract*, but demanding, from its importance, *religious observances*. If this is the correct judgment, the arrangement cannot be difficult. The State has to see that the contract is made with sufficient *publicity*, before a *civil officer* and *competent witnesses*, and is subject to an *exact registration*; and it has to refer any *religious exercise* proper to such solemn engagements to the *minister* of the *contracting parties*.

Change on this subject must quickly transpire. It is not to be supposed that the Dissenters can endure, that they shall be driven into an act of conformity which more than any thing desecrates the service, by leaving the will out of the action; or that the best feelings of the heart shall be embittered at a season most prepared of any to elicit all the tender charities of life.\*

III. Another instance of forced conformity, of which Dissenters may properly complain, relates to the *burial of their dead*. It may be thought that this declaration, if suitable to the former case, is too strong to be justified here; since the Dissenter is at liberty to provide his own burial-ground, and to adopt that mode of sepulture which his conscience or affection may dictate. But this liberty will be found mostly to exist only in *name*. Frequently it happens that the Dissenter has no other place of interment than the parochial ground; when he has the choice of place, it is often overruled by the passion he has to bury his dead where his fathers and his father's fathers slumber; but if he yields himself to the call either of affection or of necessity, he must pay the price of conformity. The law of the land gives him an equal interest with others in the church-yard; but the

\* See an excellent Pamphlet on this subject by Joshua Wilson, Esq.

law of the church prevents his enjoying this right either as a citizen or as a Christian; he must become a *churchman*.

Nothing can be more vexatious than the manner in which this frequently operates. It not only withholds an undoubted right; it disturbs and troubles the sympathies of social life at a time when to do them violence amounts to profanation. Some years since, it became my painful duty to commit the remains of a revered parent to the grave. It was many miles from the metropolis; and the only place that presented itself as suitable for the interment was the parochial ground. The pastor of my parent, and other ministers, from the respect and love they bore him, attended on the solemn occasion, but of course no one of them could be allowed to participate in the service. This was committed to cold and official hands; to the only person present who was ignorant of the deceased, and uninterested in the event; and on that account to the very last person who would have been chosen by the mourning relatives to officiate. Is it hoped by such forced compliances to renovate a sinking cause? For myself I felt that it required no small share of charity, not to resent the provisions of a *system* which carried its sectarian distinctions to the very grave; and which, in this case, sought to degrade equally, the Christian pastor by restraining him from the duties for which he was best qualified, and the parish priest by obliging him to officiate where his presence could only be regarded as an unwelcome intrusion.

The Dissenters of Ireland, who are not disposed to submit so quietly to the yoke as are the Dissenters of England, have resisted this interference with their most sacred affections. Their efforts were effectual: in this particular they are free; and no evil has been found to result to any party from the change. As precedent is thought to remove one half the difficulty from a subject, it is hoped that this matter, small in itself, but considerable in its influences, may be readily adjusted.

IV. Another serious cause of complaint to the Dissenters, is *their exclusion from the Universities*. Undoubtedly the restrictions which exist, when first imposed, were meant to act on the Dissenters, like those of Pharaoh on the Israelites; but, like his, they have wrought to a different issue. Shut out from the existing repositories of learning, they have provided, and are still providing, others for themselves. The practical good, therefore, of throwing open the Universities might be less to them now, than at any former time; still they are keenly sensible of the wrong *meant* to be inflicted; and it is the more keenly felt, because it affects the noblest aspirations and pursuits of our intellectual nature. Indeed, as the case now stands, if the Dissenter

is dishonoured, the church and the country are disgraced, in the sight of the civilized world. Is it to be endured, my Lord, at this time of day, that an Englishman, before he is permitted to study law, or medicine, or chemistry, or geometry, or Greek, must not only acknowledge himself a Christian, but a churchman? Is it to be endured, that the great seats of learning in foreign lands, should invite him to privileges which are jealously denied to him at home, and which are deemed the birthright of every scholar?

It has been repeatedly suggested that the complicated nature of the property involved in the university foundations, would make it impossible to throw them open. But, as your Lordship well knows, there is no *impossibility* in the case; there are no difficulties except such as may easily be overruled by Parliament; and all the pretences of the clergy against the admission of the Nonconformist, would operate just as effectually in the lips of the Catholic, to the exclusion of the Protestant.

Happily your Lordship's opinions on this subject are known to be both just and firm; and the country is hoping, that your elevation to power may qualify your Lordship to apply them, so as to renovate our great national institutions. Already our universities and public schools are, considering their advantages, greatly lower in the scale of advancement, than they ought to be; and if they are left under the present system, they will soon cease to be numbered amongst living things. If you would save them, my Lord, throw them open to the light and air; to the free circulation of opinion and the disencumbered pursuit of truth. Science, like light, dies in confinement, grows and brightens by radiation; make it their duty to *teach all*, and they will soon be taught *above all*.

V. The Dissenters have especially to complain, *that they are compelled to contribute towards a church from which they have withdrawn, and from which they derive no benefit.* This reference to the subject of compulsory payments is purposely limited to its effect on the Nonconformist, since there will be occasion afterwards to treat of it as a general principle. As a mere money question, there can be no doubt, that, if the churchman wishes to uphold his church, and if he fears his own generosity is not to be trusted in the matter, he is at liberty to invite the State to tax him for that purpose; but for the State to compel the Dissenter to contribute, either by tithe or church-rate, to the same object, while he is left to bear the burdens of his own church alone, is an outrage on righteous government and manly feeling. It is taking away his property without an equivalent, which is robbery; it is applying it to uphold a system

which his conscience condemns, which is sacrilege. In the case of Canada, when Romanism was made the state religion, the Episcopalians and Presbyterians protested against being taxed for its support as an intolerable abomination, and they were exonerated. Unhappily, the act of compelling the seceder at home to support Episcopacy and Presbyterianism, has not struck them as so flagrant an evil; but it is equally abominable and unjust; and, like every evil deed, it is bringing after it the sad and sure hour of retribution.

The less need be said of this monstrosity, since the public mind is evidently awake to it. The whole nation now resents it as an offence against common equity; and the more generous and religious portions of the establishments demand that their religion should be upheld by their own constituents. Parliament must deal with the subject fairly and firmly; and, if it shall still *assume* the right of taxing the Dissenter, it is impossible that it should alienate his contributions from his own to a foreign community. Now that attention is strongly directed to the subject, the only wonder is, that the State has tolerated so great an abuse; that the Dissenters have borne such a burden so long; that the clergyman has so readily lived on bread withdrawn from the seceder's table; and that the churchman has reconciled the manly and independent parts of his nature to meet and worship complacently in temples which other hands have reluctantly reared and garnished for his use!

VI. The final grievance with which I shall trouble the attention of your Lordship, is *that of the State preferring one denomination of religionists before others.*

I am perfectly aware that this reference commits me to the subject of national establishments generally: and I am also aware that one cannot, at the present time, give free and calm utterance to dissenting principles on this subject without, on the one hand, being assailed by every expression which scandal and prejudice can invent; and, on the other hand, of finding oneself associated with persons of infidel and extreme opinions. But the Dissenters are not to be drawn from a *right course* by accidental disadvantages. In the question of reform, it was our lot to be united with such as painfully differed from us; they sought perhaps for revolution, we sought for reformation; and we obtained our object and prevented theirs. So in the church question it may happen, that some who move with us, may desire its overthrow, while we seek its renovation; and we shall not be less earnest in our labours from the conviction that its renovation, on Christian principles, will prevent its destruction. At least such a temper is what the occasion requires. Those only

are fit to deal with the jarring state of ecclesiastical affairs in this great country, who can rise above momentary clamour, and look steadily forth on the serene elements, when their differences shall have been adjusted, and they shall have found their equilibrium.

It has been frequently asked, What is meant by a national establishment? and, as there has been manifest difference of opinion, it may be well to dispose at once of this question. An establishment, as it exists in Britain, is the selection of one denomination of Christians from amongst many, to participate in the favour of the State. As an expression of this favour, it is taken into close alliance with the State; it is supported by the property of the State; it has not only a virtual, but a positive and personal representation in the parliament of the State; its discipline is enforced by the power of the State; and it is indulged by the State, with manifold and exclusive privileges. Now it is evident, that such a civil establishment of *religion* is not to be confounded with *religion itself*. It is not a *part* of religion; it is not *co-extensive* with the subjects of true religion, or the members of the true church. If these favours of the State were transferred to the seceders, it would not make them more a church than they are; and were they withdrawn from the Episcopalians, it could not make them less so. The episcopal church would still have her bishops, her priests, her deacons, her temples, her congregations, her formularies, and her private endowments. She would only be left, as the dissenting communities now are, to be guided by her own counsels, and to be sustained by her own resources. Whether a body of Christians, then, is the better or the worse for such a *civil* establishment, is fairly open to opinion and discussion. The churchman, while the distinction is his, may think it beneficial, but he libels his church when he makes it essential to her life and prosperity; and the Dissenter may think it injurious; and in that judgment, while conscientiously opposing all civil establishments of religion, he may be truly seeking to promote the interests of the church at large, and of the episcopal portion of it in particular.

The arguments in support of national establishments have usually been based either on the principle of *right*, or on that of *expediency*; and since the time of Paley, the latter principle has been chiefly, if not wholly, relied on by the *discreet* advocate. This is certainly a happy circumstance. The proper test of the principle of expediency is to be found in *experiment*, and not in subtle discussion; and no man can now say, that the experiment is yet to be tried. No, my Lord, the experiment has been fully tried; it has brought us to the present crisis; all the results

are before us. If any might have thought it rashness to have formed a decision at an earlier period; all must agree, that it would be mere pusillanimity now, not to arrive at a deliberate judgment. Allow me with confidence to run over the surface of the subject.

1. In the first place, it will be admitted, without any difficulty, that, whatever may be the pretensions of a national establishment, *it must work injuriously to the Dissenter of every description.* This is my title for introducing it into a communication professedly exposing the *grievances* of Dissenters; and this title I am sorry to say is too easily justified. To do so, it is not even necessary that I should refer to those exactions of conformity and contribution already specified; these are *effects* springing from one great cause; the predominant evil is that of **UNIFORM, EXPRESSED, IMPLIED DEGRADATION.**

Partiality has ever been denounced as of the essence of bad government; it is bad in civil affairs, it is intolerable in those of religion. Yet to this evil an establishment exposes us. The professor of the State religion is, on the mere ground of his profession, placed nearer to Majesty; he is one of a privileged fraternity; he is pointed out to the community as the more correct, the safer, and every way the better man; and exaction, in some form or other, is at hand to uphold his pretensions. As he is exalted, the seceder is necessarily degraded. A cloud stands between him and the face of royalty: he does not belong to the king's church, and he is hardly thought to be true to the king's person; and he is treated as though he held a "divided allegiance," and was not to be fully trusted; certainly not to be trusted equally with a conformist. It is impossible to say what he has not suffered from this cause in *estate*, in *reputation*, and in *good fellowship*.

And can any thing exceed this in exasperation? If it were some one definite evil, to be endured at some one time of one's life, for worshipping according to one's conscience, however great, it might be bravely borne; but when it is an evil pursuing one, in its subtle and malignant influence, through every path and every hour of life; when it gives one a *lower place* in the *settled* opinion of one's fellow citizens; when it dishonours us at the exchange, at the college, in the senate, in the pulpit; when it worms itself into the paradise of home and breeds discord or indifference between parent and child, brother and sister; who can bear it? It is the continual dropping that wears the stone. The storm might fall on it—the lightning might strike it—it is unhurt; but this continued vexation chafes and corrodes even a stone!



And it is to be observed, that this evil, the greatest a generous spirit can know, must exist under the *mildest form* of an establishment. Wherever there is such an establishment there must be *toleration*; and toleration, though the boast of the churchman, is the abhorrence of the Dissenter. To tolerate a man in a given action is to *permit* him to do it; and to permit him involves the right to *prevent* him; and when these relate to an act *purely religious*, they are alike odious and execrable. To permit a man, forsooth, to worship God according to his conscience!

Besides, toleration in every form, is *inconsistent* with a national establishment. It is, in fact, a *license to disobedience*. A religious establishment rests on royal authority; but toleration says, in a given instance, this authority may be disregarded. Is not this placing the prerogative in a strange predicament? What should we say of a civil establishment, with an express license for all who desired it, to neglect its provisions? Indeed, my Lord, we are in a perilous condition. We must travel back, *if we can*, from our present position, which is called a *perfect toleration*, to an *imperfect toleration*; and as quickly as may be, we must make our escape from an *imperfect toleration* to an *exclusive* establishment, such as it was in the worst days of the worst Stuarts. The Romanist, after all our self-complacency, is the only *right man* for an establishment; *it* is essentially exclusive, and *he* is essentially exclusive; and, at this moment, Spain is his glorious example. France indeed has lately adopted a new course; instead of establishing one religion, she establishes all. There is but one other method left, as possible to any government, and that is the wiser and "more excellent way"—it is *just to let religion alone!*

2. It would undoubtedly have been some consolation to the Dissenter, if he had found, after all he had suffered on the account of an establishment, that it had, in the same proportion, benefited the church. But he is deprived even of this relief; for, to say the least, it has been as *injurious to the church herself*, as to those who withdraw from her communion. Establishments, where other sects are found, act on an *oppressive* principle; and it is of the nature of oppression, in its mildest form, to injure the oppressor quite as much as the oppressed. If it is the tendency of a national establishment to create irritation, discontent, and resentment on the mind of the separatist; it as certainly leads, on the part of the favoured conformist, to pride, contempt, and intolerance. Sad and abundant proof, that it has worked, *as a system*, most powerfully to such an end, is everywhere to be found. I rejoice to know that there are

most charming exceptions, but we have now, not to treat of the exceptions, but of the rule. The Dissenters *as a body*, have uniformly been treated by the endowed church *as a body*, with scorn, contumely and hate. No epithets, however low, have been too low, by which to degrade their profession, their pastors, and their institutions: whatever exemptions they have obtained from the cruellest exactions and the most unjust persecutions, they have obtained, not at the Christian intercession of the church, but in the face of her frowning and determined resistance: and had the high and true churchman had his way, not a resting-place would have been left to them on British soil.

Besides, the *patronage* and State endowment, which are a part of the establishment, are a source of awful and extensive *corruption* to a religious and spiritual community. They attract to it continually the worldly, the ambitious, the indolent; while the evil is perpetuated and increased, by placing the whole economy above the wholesome influence of public opinion. So great is the evil arising from this system, that it would have reached an extremity long before the present time, had it not have been for the interposition of a *redeeming power*. This power is none other than that of an *independent* and *voluntary* effort, on the part of a number of pious churchmen, to buy up livings as they fell vacant, that they might secure to the people a pious and efficient ministry. It is not saying too much, that the church owes three-fifths of her most laborious and pious clergymen to the action of this counteracting principle; a principle, be it observed, my lord, of *dissenting* character, though here subjected to strange functions. That *system* must indeed work badly, which requires a standing act of simony to preserve it from universal incapacity and dishonour.

But still it is urged, that the church, whether by this or other means, *has done good*. I cheerfully admit it. It has done *great good*; and it has not been, since the Reformation, so well prepared to accomplish good and great things, as it is at this time. I rejoice in this; but I am at liberty to maintain, that it has not done the good it *might have done*. It may indeed be said, that to maintain this assertion, I require to know, not what the church has done, but what it would have done under different circumstances, and that this is not possible. I am sensible the case is greatly one of comparison; but it is so plain and tangible that it demands no great nicety in disposing of it. For instance, when we look to Ireland, there is no difficulty in saying, that *less* could not have been done for the Protestant religion, in the last two centuries, by *any* system or by *no* sys-

tem, than has been done by the endowed and dignified establishment of that unhappy land!

Then, if the matter is to be one of *comparison*; although we cannot compare the church as she *is*, with the church as she *would have been*; we may fairly compare the church as she *is* with the sister communions around her as *they are*. It is only doing her justice to suppose, that if her character is as apostolic and her forms as scriptural as her constituents believe, that she ought, at least, to be *equal* in piety and efficiency to any; and that the privileges with which she is indulged by the State, should be so many advantages for her and against dissent. But what is the fact? Our churches, whether Baptist, Independent, Wesleyan or Methodist, have more purity, more concord, more efficiency by far, than the endowed church. All the mighty movements in the cause of our common religion during the last fifty years, which more than any thing will distinguish the period in future history,—whence have they sprung? Who first carried Sabbath and daily education for the poor, over the face of the land,—the Churchman or Dissenter? Who originated and chiefly sustained the Bible Society,—the Churchman or the Dissenter? Who planned and upheld our earliest and most efficient Missionary Institutions,—the Churchman or the Dissenter? Again, our Tract Societies, our Christian Instruction or Visiting Societies, our Benevolent Societies, our modern Charitable Institutions,—whence are they? There is but one reply to these inquiries, and sorry I am that that reply is decidedly against the State religion. All, whether it be religion, education, or charity; whether devoted labour at home or abroad, have found their origin or their encouragement chiefly with the Dissenter, and not with the Churchman.

It is true, that there are thousands of noble-minded persons in the Episcopal community, who, not able to witness these Christian efforts in our day without participation, have risen superior to the spirit of party, and have united as they could to promote and to imitate them; but for their redeeming services, they have been marked as dishonoured men in their own communion, and they are so to this hour. The church, properly so called, in the very presence of all these wonderful efforts of piety and zeal, has been not merely neutral; it has positively resisted them, so long as there was hope in resistance. When resistance was vain and disgraceful, it has either sought to unite itself to our popular institutions, rather for the ungracious purpose of inoculating them with the virus of party, than for giving freedom and power to their labours; or it has attempted an imitation in its own community—an imitation for the most part of

such success as painfully to remind the beholder of the efforts of Pharaoh's magicians when compared with the inspired performances of Moses and Aaron.

But how is it, my Lord, that this difference, which none can question, should exist? If the church, in the great conflict which is now waging against the powers of darkness, superstition and oppression, is the last in the field and the first weary; if her efforts have been constrained and feeble; and if too often she has thrown her dead weight as a protection to the adversary,—to what are we to ascribe it? To her episcopal form and principles? Were I the veriest round-head that ever breathed, I could not believe so much! No, my Lord, it is *state favour* which is alone guilty of the evil. This has taught her to sleep in silky indolence while others worked; this has diverted her attention from the things that are spiritual and proper to her, to the things that are worldly and improper; this has made her reluctant and unprepared to descend from her altitude, and to unite with the common friends of religion and virtue in hostility to the common foe. Treat Independency or Methodism as you have treated Episcopacy, and it would become the same feeble, worldly thing. Set the church free, my Lord; in behalf of the church, I say, set her free; and I answer for it, she shall run as fair a course, and put forth as strong an arm, and obtain as rich a spoil, as any of the children of the Reformation.

3. There is the more propriety in making this representation to your Lordship, because, what is thus shown to be injurious to the church, is in like manner *injurious to the State itself*.

If there would have been truth in this declaration at any time, it so happens that there is more truth in it now than there could be at any former period. While the government of this country was conducted on a principle of patronage, and that not of the purest kind, it might seem very statesmanlike to secure so large a portion as the church supplied; and while that government steadily inclined to high, monarchical principles, it might be confident, that the worldly influence created by the State in favour of the church, would be used in favour of itself. But this time, in both respects, is gone, and gone for ever. Never again can this country be governed on the principle of patronage; if governed safely and prosperously, it must be on the principle of the *common good*; and to be so governed, there must be an exact sympathy with the common mind. The patronage, therefore, which was useful to the government, under other circumstances, may become a serious evil now: it may stand between the ruling power and the people, and prevent it from

perceiving the general wants, or feeling with the general mind, of the community.

Then our view of the case is still more serious. It is doing no disservice to the church to say, that, as it is now constituted, it is unlike every institution by which it is surrounded. It is essentially *arbitrary* and *despotic* in its form. Even its constituents have no direct influence over it. Its bishops are appointed, without the consent of the clergy; its clergy, without the consent of the people. It has a natural and necessary antipathy to liberal principles and opinions. To be consistent, the Churchman *must* be, in the strictest sense of the term, a tory, as the Dissenter *must* be a whig. This may work no great harm, while the State is ruled by men of high and illiberal principles; but let it pass into other hands, and the church will be found amongst its bitterest foes. It will not avail that government, for the time being, has the power of patronage in its hands; the church will conclude on its safety in any case; and it will prefer to receive it from those it loves, rather than from those it hates. Between such a government and such a church there cannot be any peaceful alliance. The government may promise and prefer; the church may yield and accept; but she cannot be won; she is only waiting for the first occasion, when working with other antagonist powers, she may "trip up its heels" and laugh at its overthrow.

What have we seen during the last three eventful years, my Lord, but evidence in "confirmation strong" of this, and more than this? Of all the enemies the present government has had, is there one that has shown more determined opposition? Has it not uniformly and strenuously opposed every method of reform, of melioration? Has it not chiefly sought, by all this opposition, to get rid of a liberal government? and to accomplish this, has it not, more than once, put in peril the peace of the whole empire?

But why is this? Why should Episcopacy have this power to trouble the State, when no form of dissent has it? It is simply because it is taken into *alliance* with the State. In the changes which must happen to the church, it is this alone that makes them, in the least degree, difficult or dangerous. And, to look beyond ourselves, it is this alliance of the church with the State, which, in half the countries in Europe, is, more than any thing else, obstructing reformation and threatening revolution. Let our government then be wise. Let it deprive the church of its *civil* power; and it will increase in the inverse proportion its *religious* power. This act would have, at once, a double effect; it would convey a great benefit to the

people, and redeem the State from as great an evil. I deprecate, for the sake of a government I admire, an opposite course. They have found things as they are, and so far are not responsible; but let them *confirm* them on their present principle, and then let them prepare to suffer as the first victim. The eagle will then fall; but it will be by an arrow feathered from his own wing.

4. The remaining notice on this subject is the most weighty; *it is the injurious effect of a national establishment on the state of religion generally.* Most of what has been already stated, would naturally lead to this conclusion; but its importance demands some additional remarks.

Observe its influence on *Infidelity*. All the friends of religion are now called to contend, and in no mean warfare, with this demon of unrighteousness; and all who have committed themselves to this contest, are sensible of the prejudice and disadvantage arising to the cause, by the position of the establishment. This is the form of religion which most strikes the attention of the adversary; and some of the noblest champions of revealed truth have fought under the cover of its shield; and signal victory has repeatedly attended their arms. But the unbeliever has concealed his wounds by his raillery, and has half persuaded himself, that he has been beaten only because he fought at *disadvantage*. "Let us meet," he has exclaimed, "on equal terms. You say that your religion is divine; and that it can stand on its own testimony. Why then is it upheld by the State, and defended by the sword? At present you commit yourselves to the absurdity of supporting what you deem to be the word of God, by an act of Parliament; and exact from reluctant hands the sustenance your church would not otherwise command. In opposing us, you are only labouring in your vocation; and struggling to secure your worldly wealth and dignities. Put your pretensions to the proof. Let your religion stand on its own merits; let your principles, like our own, rest only on the convictions and contributions of the sincere disciple, and then see who will have the best of the field." Who does not deeply regret, that such men as Barrow, and Paley, and Skelton, and Butler, who have brought moral evidence, as near as may be, to a demonstration, should have had their argument rejected from the prejudice created by their connexion with an objectionable system?

Look at its influence in producing *delusion* on the spirit of the people. The national establishment rests, as Hooker observes, on the principle of making every member of the State a member of the church. But there are at least two-fifths of the people who have no just sense of religion, and who even profess to

have none, who are nevertheless encouraged on this principle to consider themselves as attached to the church, and as *secure* by such attachment. They are received into it by baptism, and are "made Christians;" they can claim, as Christians, the other privileges of the church, though they may choose to neglect them through life; and, at last, they may expect, as Christians, to enjoy burial by a service which expresses assured and "certain hope of their resurrection to eternal life." It is not for me to know, whether this more religious view of the effect produced by a *national* establishment, has struck the mind of your Lordship; but I do know, that the Dissenters, as the friends of serious religion, are greatly more afflicted by this evil, than by all the personal wrongs under which they suffer. They are constantly brought into contact with persons under this delusion; it is complete; it remains with them to the last. They have lived, and they are dying, without any regard to true religion of any form; but they are recognized by the church; they deem themselves secure in that recognition; and they die in peace. No evil is so appalling as this! Were the evils of sectarianism a thousand-fold greater than they are, all the evils of all the sectaries, would bear no comparison with this! In the course of a generation, **THREE MILLIONS** of our people are dying under this delusion—with "a lie in their right hand!" This is really frightful, to a mind at all prepared to appreciate the value of religion and the solemnities of a future world. Blood, "the blood of souls," is on the church that propagates such delusion; and it is on the State, if the State makes itself accessory to such delusion!

5. After these summary statements it may be needless to advance additional evidence on that portion of the argument which relates to the *expediency* of a national establishment; and if the subject be disposed of as a question of expediency, it may be thought unnecessary to make it a question of *right*. Perhaps, however, your Lordship will bear with me while I glance at it under this aspect.

The Dissenters maintain, not that a civil establishment of religion is wrong *because* it is inexpedient, but that, if it were thought to be expedient, it is *still wrong*. They believe, that the government ought not to interfere; and that, in the state of this empire, they cannot consistently interfere with the worship and religious opinions of the people. They believe that the State *ought* not to interfere with the religion and worship of the people. Those who have recently ventured to argue for an establishment on the ground of *right*, have exposed the weakness of the cause more effectually than an adversary could have done. They have quoted Abraham and Melchisedec! They have appealed

to an antiquated dispensation, which they admit to be abrogated ; and which was every way peculiar while it lasted ! They have argued from the right of a parent to provide religion and worship for his children ; as though the cases of a child and an adult were parallel ! As though the government of a family, which is necessarily despotic, and which nature has supplied with special checks against abuse, were the proper model for a commonwealth !

As a scriptural argument, the only document for a just appeal is the New Testament ; and this, for the most part, has been carefully avoided. There the warmest advocates of a national religion do not pretend to find a precept, or the fragment of a precept, in their favour ; while every candid observer must find, that the *whole spirit* of the book is against them. The kingdom of God, or the church, is not of this world ; it cometh not—is not promoted—by might or power or observation ; Christ is its head, and not a temporal prince ; it falls under the denomination of the “things which are God’s,” and not “the things which are Cæsar’s ;” and it claims to stand and move independent of all human authority—troubling none except as they trouble it. Its acknowledged disciples were such not by compulsion ; not while indifferent ; but by a *voluntary* act of the mind ; and its resources were found, not in the taxed, but the free contributions of its disciples ; and while this was its state, there was no virtue, which it did not exemplify—there was no victory which it did not achieve.

And, what is thus asserted for the economy of the New Testament, is in substance true even of the Jewish dispensation. Peculiar and peremptory as it was, the contributions of the people to the support of religion, were not *compulsory* but *voluntary*. They were bound, then, as we are now, by the command of God, but they were free from civil exaction. Even the Jewish tithe was not enforced by the power of the magistrate. It would have been contrary to the genius of religion so to have enforced it. Religion looks rather to the posture of the mind than to the overt action ; while the State looks not to the inclination, but to the action only : and by compelling service to religion while the spirit remains averse, it has gone as far as human power could go in desecrating the things which we all hold to be most sacred.

To turn from this scriptural reference. In the complicated science of government, there certainly is no distinction clearer and broader than that existing between what is *civil* and what is *religious* ; and one should suppose that no proposition could be more palpably just than that *what is civil alone, falls within the province of civil government, and that what is religious*



*is, from its very character, necessarily beyond its control.* But it is confounding to find, that a truth which might be deemed self-evident, has not yet become a principle of government; and that, with all the disastrous evidence of an opposite course before them, no statesmen have been found wise enough to shun the evil and pursue the good. A state religion under Pagan governments, brought on the early Christians all their severe persecutions; yet the Christians no sooner obtained power, than they allied their religion with the civil establishment. A state religion brought on Europe all the curses of Popery; yet the Reformers sought to elevate Protestantism in its stead. A state religion in our own land brought Charles to the scaffold, and spread massacre, martyrdom and proscription over the empire; yet the "pilgrim fathers" who fled from it for life to foreign shores, were scarcely weaned from this folly, and left much for their noble offspring to effect. A state religion, at this moment, is threatening us with convulsion at home; and abroad—in China, in India, in Spain, wherever it exists—with the greatest obstacle to missionary labour we know; and still we cling to the luscious error. How hard is it for any man, however enlightened and wise, to deliver himself from the seductions of error, when it seeks to retain its possession of the mind by flattering his pride and enlarging the region of his power!

I am aware that a distinction has been adopted by the modern advocate of establishments, in order to neutralize a portion of the evidence on this subject. It has been said, with some confidence, that the right of the State, though it cannot extend to the support of a false religion, does extend to the support of the *true* religion. This however is a mere sophism. If the right is a prerogative of the State at all, then the State must be sole judge of the manner in which that prerogative is to be used; this is the only way in which it can be employed. To support the opposite of this, is to support an absurdity; it is saying, for instance, that the emperor of China has not the right to establish the religion which he and his people believe to be true; but that he must establish only the Christian religion, because we believe it to be true, while he and his people believe it to be false.

Look at the working of this right in our own empire, where, from its tolerant character, it has had to contend with difficulties unnatural to it. If the king of England has the right to establish only the true religion, then how is it that his majesty has established *several*—Episcopacy, Presbyterianism and Romanism? Again, if it is the prerogative of the king to establish religion, then it is his highest prerogative, and I, as his subject, am under the highest obligations to submit to him in this parti-

cular; but how shall I render an exact and full obedience? His majesty equally sanctions all; but I cannot conscientiously profess all; yet if I chose one, then my obedience to my sovereign is not so ample and full as his prerogative. Suppose, because Episcopacy is his established religion in England, I become an Episcopalian; I pass into Scotland, and I am denounced as a separatist; I cross over to Canada, and am denounced as a heretic, by the very institutions of the sovereign, and when I sought to place myself nearest to his favour. But it is enough, more than enough. Such folly, though it has continued long, cannot, it is evident, continue much longer. "Then," said the immortal Milton ages past, "then both commonwealth and religion will at length, if ever, flourish, when either they who govern discern between civil and religious, or they only who so discern, shall be admitted to govern." That time is now coming.

I have thus, my Lord, submitted, with what brevity and clearness I could command, the case of the Dissenters to your attention. I have shown it to be one of intolerable grievance; as it is unjust to them; as it acts injuriously on every other party; and as it relates exclusively to a subject which rests between God and the conscience, and with which no earthly government has the right or competency to interfere. To a mind like your Lordship's, I am fully persuaded that such a case cannot suffer from the presence of difficulty and objection; but as I desire to make this statement as complete as may be, and as some objections have been pressed into popular circulation with the hope of withdrawing a calm attention from the whole case, it may be proper to refer to them by a slight notice. Slight notice is all they will require.

1. It is said, that the principle of allowing religion to stand independently of the State, and to make its way by its own merits, is the *novel* opinion of unpractised minds, and is not to be trusted. A dignitary of the church, from whose erudition and liberality better things might have been expected, has recently asserted, that it is altogether a new opinion, and that it owes its origin to the French Revolution.\* This, however, is as a declaration untrue, and as an insinuation, ungenerous. There is indeed a connexion in which the opinion may be said to be new. To the churchman, and to the statesman, who have found the church in union with the State, and are contented to have it so; and who have thought dissent from what is established too insignificant in any form for inquiry, it may appear to be a crude novelty. But it is not a *new*, it is a *revived* opinion. True it is,

\* See Dr. Dealtry's Sermon.

it was lost in the dark ages of the world, when every thing else most precious to man was lost; true it is, that the reformers, Luther, Calvin, Knox, and Cranmer, did not avow it—did not appreciate it. But this principle was the principle on which the church lived and flourished during the first three centuries. Afterwards, when religion became wholly a matter of priestcraft and state policy, it lived, where alone in fact it was allowed to live, in the deserts and fastnesses of Europe. At the Reformation it came from its hiding places; and, though it could not prevail at once over the force of custom and prejudice in the majority, it found entertainment in the bosom of a respectable minority. It has flourished and expanded from that time to the present, and it is now the parent of all the thriving and unendowed communities of the land, as it is also of the whole church in America. Is it fair then to denounce such a principle as an untried novelty?—as the child of the French Revolution? Can such assertions do harm to any party except to the party which ventures to make them?

2. It is also maintained against this principle and the equality which the Dissenter claims, that it would necessarily involve an act of *spoliation and confiscation*, which would be unjust in itself and dangerous as an example. This is a subject on which much has been said, and with much vehement and vituperative declamation. It may be disposed of in a few sentences. In the first place, rely only on it, my Lord, that the Dissenter is too just to desire, in seeking justice for himself, to do or to see done an act of injustice to another party.

Then, secondly, it should be distinctly understood, so far as it is thought to be a matter of spoliation, the Dissenters are asking for *no share* of the spoil. Much unworthy insinuation has been directed to this point; but the Dissenters cast it from them as unjust to themselves, as unworthy in the accusers. In most cases, it is not believed when uttered. They feel indeed, that if there is to be endowment, they have as much right to their share as others: but they deny the right altogether. If the government were to propose to place them on the footing of Episcopacy to-morrow, to-morrow they would respectfully decline the offer. They would not receive it, if they could; they cannot receive it, if they would. They were the basest of men, if, after professing to take high and holy ground, and contending against State endowment as an evil, they could consent to participate in that evil. No, my Lord, this is the exultation of the Dissenter, and no man shall destroy this boasting; he seeks for nothing, of all the church possesses, for himself. Whatever shall become of what is called church property, he asks not a fraction, nor will he receive it.

Then, thirdly, as it is an affair between the church and the State, the Dissenter desires to witness nothing that shall be entitled to the name of *confiscation*. We say in this, as in every case, respect private property and private endowment as always sacred; and deal only with that property which is *public*, with which the State has repeatedly dealt; and which is of the nature of State allowance for services rendered to the religion of the State. Even here, we say, in looking firmly to a wiser and more economical arrangement, let the evils incident to a state of transition be as few as possible. Let the new state of things come in, as the life interest in the old system dies away; and where it may be needful to anticipate the slow but effectual working of this principle, and where parties suffer by the deviation, let them be open to fair compensation. Nothing can work well for the Dissenters, or for religion, which works unrighteously to the Churchman.

3. Another objection taken to the views of Dissenters is, that if the principle of State allowance were abandoned, the *principle of voluntary contribution is not adequate to the proposed end*. An accidental weight has been given to this objection, by the zeal with which it has been put forth by one of the best men of the day. That admirable man, though never wrong in intention, is too often so in argument; it will not be difficult to release the subject from the verbiage in which it has been enveloped, and to show that its charm lay in words and in nothing more.

It seems, as far as we can gather up the opinion, that the voluntary principle is not worthy of confidence because it is not so efficacious, so uniform, or so permanent in its operation, as the principle of endowment. Let us look at these points.

It will not work, it is said, so *efficaciously*. This, as a general assertion, is so strange and so directly in the teeth of evidence, that one is disposed to ask, can we and our opponents be agreed on the import of the term? If by not being so efficacious, is meant, that it will not so readily provide some 12, 20, or 30,000*l.* per annum, for the bishop or archbishop; that it will not provide for some 4000 clergy without cure of souls; that it will not supply some 300,000*l.* for sinecure allowances, then undoubtedly it is not so efficacious; but if it is meant that it will not so well provide the means of instruction and worship to the people, then we wonder at the boldness which can commit any man to the declaration. The facts, my Lord, are all on one side. In London and its adjacent boroughs we have 459 places of worship; of these, though London is the strong-hold of churches, 265 are dissenting and only 194 are established places. Dissent has spread over the country about 8000 chapels, besides

school-houses and preaching-rooms; it has provided for the respectable education and sustenance of a ministry, commensurate with this demand; while it has done this, it has been made to contribute its proportion towards the support of an endowed church; and yet it has, as if refreshed by its exertions, greatly surpassed that church in its contributions of service and money to those great efforts of Christian benevolence which are not of a sectarian but of a general character.

But it is urged, that the voluntary principle will not work *uniformly*; that though it should provide for the large towns, it could not carry the means of religion into our *small villages* and agricultural districts. There is something plausible in this argument, and it rests on many conscientious minds as a real difficulty. A simple question or two is sufficient, however, to rectify the judgment. If by preference, any parts of our country were selected as poor and thinly populated, they would be Cornwall and Wales. Who has carried religion over these unpromising districts,—the endowed or the dissenting teacher? One more question: There are in England and Wales 3000 stations at which the curates who serve them have less than 100*l.* a year; these are certainly the smallest and poorest in the country;—could the voluntary principle *do less* for them? is it not certain, if they deserved to hold their stations at all, that it would do *much more* for them?

Then it is said, that whatever is allowed in favour of the voluntary principle, it is not sufficiently *steady* and *permanent* to be relied on. If by its want of permanence is meant, that it will not continue its support irrespective of the State of religion, and of the services and merits of its ministers, then I claim this as a peculiar excellence. It is a faithful indicator of the presence and power of religion; it fails where it is not, and shows the true state of the place; and it lives and flourishes where it is, and in its turn contributes eminently to its expansion and permanence. To do more than this; to supply the outward form and body of religion, except as true religion is near to sustain and animate it, is to do too much; it is to deceive the eye with the appearances of life, when there is no life; and it is to propagate death age after age. The small portion of the dissenting church which is endowed, is rather like a sepulchre than a sanctuary. Germany has an endowed church, where religion is on the surface, but where neology is beneath. France has an endowed church, where religion is professed, but where infidelity is real; and every where it is found to present the most formidable obstacle to the spread of vital religion.

After all, the principle has not had fair trial in our land. It

has been more fully and extensively tried in America; and although attempts have been made to depreciate the state of religion in that land, I am prepared to say advisedly, *that it is better supplied with the means of religion than any other land under heaven.* One of its small and new towns, for instance, as an ordinary sample, contains 6,000 persons; it has five churches; and half the population attends them. New York has 200,000 inhabitants; it has 101 churches; this will give, at an average attendance of 500 each, a fourth of the population as church-going; and that of London by the same estimate would give only one-seventh. It has 15,000 churches raised amongst a population of 12,000,000; and the average attendance cannot be taken at less than one in four, while that of Great Britain cannot be taken at any thing like that amount. And what is remarkable is, that it has achieved this with a population *doubling itself in fourteen years; and instead of appealing to the principle of state endowment, as in an emergency, it has renounced it as inefficient where it did exist.* Thus we have a land, under the greatest disadvantages; without any endowment for the purposes of religious worship; provided with more churches, with a more efficient ministry, and with a better average reward for ministration, than we have in our own country, where every advantage has been possessed for ages, and where some three millions a-year are given to uphold an establishment!

If such facts settle the question, they will not create surprise; for this, after all, is the ordinary mode in which these principles work, the one to evil, the other to good. The principle of endowment makes a place for the man; the voluntary principle makes a man for the place. The one is a premium to indolence; the other is the reward of service. The one is indiscriminate, and falls alike on the evil and the good; the other is a nice discerner of character, and apportions remuneration to worth. The one is deceptive, and leads you to conclude on religion where it does not exist; the other shows you things as they are with unerring certainty. The one is deadly, it not only has no life, its tendency is to destroy life where it is; while the other is vivacious, where it is there is life, to that life it imparts additional vigour; it has an expansive power, which prepares it for emergency, and teaches it to gather confidence from difficulty, and life from exertion. This is true with remarkable uniformity. Endowment withers every thing it touches. Endow a royal academy, my Lord, and genius disappears; and commonplace men are drawn together, who wash each other's hands and repeat each other's praises, while the world leaves them to their monopoly and their insignificance. Endow a hospital, and

charity seeks some other sphere where she may offer voluntary service and spontaneous sympathy; while her place is filled by perfunctory persons who crave the place, not to pity the miserable, but to live in comfort. Endow a church, and religion declines and withers and dies; and formality, worldliness, and ultimately infidelity, take its place; except as this may be prevented by the action of different and *extrinsic* causes.

4. Finally it is objected, that it is an admitted principle of government that the *majority* must legislate for the *minority*, and that as the sectaries *are a minority* they must submit to their situation. If this question were of a *civil* nature, it would be subject to such a rule; but it is *wholly religious*, and the Dissenters deny, firmly deny, that the State has any right to come between a man's conscience and his supreme Judge on any pretence whatever.

But, assuming the right to act on such a principle in religious worship, it may then be inquired, Is this the principle which has settled the religion of Ireland?

Again, if the right is admitted, and if that right is to be exercised in favour of the majority, then the churchman must yield his place to the Dissenter, *for he has the majority*. Take the United Empire, and the majority is overwhelming;\* take Great Britain, and it is very considerable; take only England and Wales, and it is still decided. The Dissenters have the larger congregations; they have the more communicants; their strength is in the middle classes; and the middle classes are proverbially the strength and beauty of the land.

If figures are demanded on this subject they are at hand; and they shall be supplied by the churchman rather than by the Dissenter. The Bishop of London, who is more enlightened on such matters than many, has stated several times in Parliament, that the Dissenters compose one-fourth of the people; and the expectation has been that the mind would pass to the conclusion, that the remaining three-fourths were churchmen. But such a conclusion is inadmissible. It appears by other evidence from the same quarter, that in the returns from one diocese, which may be taken as an average specimen, there were 110,000 persons composing the population; and that out of these only 19,069 were attendants at church, and only 4,134 attended the communion. This gives only about one-seventh as going to church, and about one in thirty-eight as using the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This would give, then, for the nation at large, scarcely 350,000 persons as in communion with the

\* It is in round numbers as FIFTEEN MILLIONS to SEVEN MILLIONS!

church; and taking the proportion of attendants not at one-seventh but at one-sixth, it would give, in a population of 12,000,000, only 2,000,000; while, by the Bishop of London's low estimate (which we are far from allowing) the proportion of Dissenters is 3,000,000. But suppose it is insisted, that the gross numbers of the people must be made to tell on this question; then, my Lord, I boldly affirm, if it were submitted to the sense of the whole nation, whether the Episcopal church should stand on its merits, or be supported by the present State endowments, that the large majority would determine against a civil establishment of religion. And if this would be the issue when an expenditure of some 5,000,000*l.* annually in the United Kingdom is silently employing its amazing influence in favour of an establishment, what would be the size of the majority, if the nation were left to a disinterested and conscientious opinion?\*\*\*\*\*

Great men, it is said, are made for great occasions; but great occasions do not always attend them. Never, my Lord, was a government more happy in this particular than that with which you are connected. Already it has had opportunities of service, which ages might fail to supply; and still there are opportunities before it which might be sufficient to distinguish ages. Rightly improved, there are no blessings that the country needs, which, under Providence, they may not bestow. Religion may be freed from her encumbrances, and the State from her embarrassments. Sectarian animosities may be not only subdued but destroyed, and the fellowship of good citizens may be made complete. A fresh and mighty stimulus may be given to the piety, the education, the industry, the commerce of the land; and England's commonwealth may, in advanced age, renew her strength like the eagle; and all coming generations may point to the present passing page of her history as the brightest and the best which even she ever saw!

But it is proper to such patriotic expectations to remember, that the *opportunity* is equalled by the *responsibility*. Wellington's official life was too long for his official reputation; and what he lost has made the nation itself the poorer.



ART. II.—*Tholuck's Interpretation of The Sermon on the Mount.\***J. N. Alexander*

IF an apology is due to any of our readers, for the frequency with which we have drawn their attention to German books, we deem it sufficient to say; first, that we present nothing which is not in our judgment intrinsically valuable; secondly, that while so much unsound and dangerous matter is let loose upon the American public from the same source, it is imperatively demanded that the bane should be followed by an appropriate antidote, produced under the same climate. But surely, no circumlocution is necessary, in introducing to our readers any thing from the pen of Dr. Tholuck. His name is already dear to believers in this country. We have learned long since to regard him as one of the few self-denying and heroic spirits of Germany, who have thrown themselves into the breach, and opposed a dauntless front to the irruptions of a deistical theology; as the friend of the doctrines of grace; as the denouncer of corrupt teachers in high places; and as the laborious, affectionate, indefatigable and eloquent preacher of the Gospel. Several of his productions have already been translated for the *Biblical Repertory*, and other works; and his commentary on the Romans is on the eve of appearing in an English dress.

The latest work of Professor Tholuck is that of which we have given the title in the margin: an Exposition, critical and doctrinal, of the *Sermon on the Mount*, with a discussion of the theological and ethical statements of that incomparable, inspired summary. By the friends of the Gospel in Germany, the Professor is thought here to have surpassed all his former efforts; and we have good reason to suppose, that in the view of the author himself, it is the capital production of his pen.

In undertaking to review a commentary, there is scarcely any medium between a general estimate of the principles of interpretation, and a minute sifting of detailed particulars. The latter would be tedious and repulsive, and we must be content to speak in general terms of this valuable exposition. It is not to be understood that our theology is that of the author, or that we assent to every statement upon which do not animadvert. We are well persuaded of the truth and value of some doctrines

\* Philologisch-theologische Auslegung der Bergpredigt Christinach Matthäus, zugleich ein Beitrag zur Begründung einer rein-biblischen Glaubens- und Sittenlehre, von A. Tholuck, Doctor der Theol. u. s. w. Hamburg, 1833. pp. 544. 8vo.

which he indignantly rejects, and we stand in dread of as many more which he steadfastly maintains. At the same time we find in all his writings a sincere reverence for the holy standard, and the actual possession, in good measure, of those cardinal Gospel truths which distinguish us from Romanists, Pelagians, Arminians and Rationalists. Yet Tholuck is a German, and not an Englishman, or an American. Never, even amidst the aridity of verbal inquiries, does he regard any object in what Bacon expressively calls a *dry light*. He soars and expatiates in the region of speculation, and is not only obscure, but sometimes transcendental. The philosophy of Germany, which we are wont to regard as a baseless vision, he cherishes as the very bulwark of the faith; and sincerely laments that the Christians of England and America are bound down to a shallow and empirical system. In the periodical work of which he is the editor, he has a special article upon this subject, in which he deplores the indifference of Americans to the transcendental philosophy, and predicts that without the latter, our boasted "common-sense" will but engender the most heartless infidelity. Such are not our views; but we do not find that these peculiarities so far taint the work before us, as to render it either useless or injurious.

There has, perhaps, been no period in the history of the church, during which the Sermon on the Mount has not been considered one of the most important products of inspiration. It is, if not the longest, certainly the most pregnant of our Lord's recorded discourses; a divine comment on the law, a divine syllabus of Christian ethics. Yet there have been few distinct commentaries upon this discourse. Among the Fathers, Augustin is the only one who has treated it separately. The exposition by Chrysostom, in his homilies on Matthew, stands next in rank to his celebrated interpretation of the Romans; and Thomas Aquinas is reported to have said, that he would not exchange this work for the city of Paris. To this we may add the comments of Theophylact, Euthymius Zigabenus, and Isidorus Pelusiota. Among the Latins, Hilary has treated the subject in a clear and nervous manner, though not without the characteristics of the school of Origen. The brief notes of Jerome cannot be consulted with much advantage. The two books of Augustin (Tom. iii. ed. Bened.) contain much that is valuable, in the midst of indistinct and hesitating views.

After the period of the Reformation, Erasmus is the first whose exposition of these chapters is deserving of notice. Luther's commentary is rather a collection of homilies than an exposition. Melancthon also wrote brief annotations. After

this epoch the commentators become so numerous that we shall not pursue the enumeration. It will suffice to say a word concerning recent works, published on the continent of Europe. The names Rosenmueller, Paulus, Kuinoel, Henneberg, Fritzsche, Olshausen, and Meyer, are well known. Among these Olshausen is distinguished for originality, acuteness, vigour, and piety. Among Roman Catholics, may be noticed Gratz and Kistemaker. Several treatises concerning this portion of Scripture have been published, by Jehnichen, Oertel, Pott, Rau, Grosse, and Jentzen; but none of these are commentaries.

The question whether the Sermon on the Mount as recorded by Matthew is identical with that contained in the sixth chapter of Luke, is ably discussed and answered in the affirmative. In opposition, also, to those who consider these three chapters a cento of aphorisms, delivered at various times, the author maintains the unity of the discourse; which, somewhat after the manner of Olshausen, he analyses as follows: (1.) The relation of the disciples to the kingdom of God, their destiny and position in the world: v. 1–16. (2.) The relation of the new to the old covenant; with a spiritual interpretation of the law, in opposition to Pharisaical glosses: 17–48. (3.) The sole motive of genuine good works; namely, respect to God, exemplified in the several instances of alms, fasting, and prayer: vi. 1–18. (4.) Cautions against attempting a divided service of God; the divine principle must be paramount: vi. 19–34. (5.) Insulated expositions to self-knowledge, wisdom towards our neighbour: with a maxim in the twelfth verse which comprehends our whole social duties: vii. 1–12. (6.) Exhortation to earnestness in seeking salvation, warning against hypocrisy—admonitions to be doers as well as hearers of these instructions.

It is an interesting inquiry, whether this discourse of our Lord was addressed solely to the little circle of the twelve apostles, or to the whole multitude who waited on his preaching. In the Roman Catholic church the prevalent opinion has been, that the sermon was intended for the apostles alone. The majority of Protestant interpreters however, rationalists as well as supernaturalists have united in the belief that it was pronounced for the benefit of Christian disciples at large. The judgment of Tholuck is, that it was addressed to all disciples and followers of Christ, but that as the church then consisted mainly of the twelve, and involved the others only in various inferior degrees of connexion, it had primary reference to the apostles. For our Lord had a special and complete argument. The reader is referred to the work itself, pages 25–32.

A controversy, equally interesting and momentous, has long existed with regard to the general import of this discourse, and the relation of its contents to the plan of mercy. That it is taken up chiefly with the inculcation of moral duties is undeniable. But the conclusion of Socinians and other Rationalists from this concession, is dangerous and appalling; for they have endeavoured to prove that the whole system of Christianity is to be sought here; that this is the key to the New Testament; that atonement and the work of the Spirit are mere appendages to the fabric; and that Christ here stands forth revealed as a divine witness or teacher, and nothing more. According to the cardinal principle of Kant, here it is that the fairest relic of the genuine Gospel, the *purior typus doctrinae Christianae*, is to be sought. In a word, because the Sermon on the Mount is a compendium of morals, the Gospel is no other than a moral code, and Jesus a moral apostle. In consistency with this, a large school of modern German theologians make bold to dissect away from the pure body of the New Testament what they call the mysticism of John and the Judaism of Paul; leaving us instead of the symmetrical, glowing, animated original, a denuded, heartless, lifeless corpse. Tholuck beautifully and triumphantly confutes their hypothesis by showing that this portion of the New Testament is a harmonious complement of the rest; that if John is mystical, Matthew is mystical no less; that the Rationalist, with these views, is more absurd than the Chubbs, Morgans, and Mandevilles of England; and closes with the unanswerable interrogatory: Why He whom we all acknowledge to have been sent as a Saviour for the whole world, (if he were a mere teacher) acted as a public instructor scarcely three years, and never exercised his office beyond the confines of Palestine?

The scope of the Sermon on the Mount is well stated to be, *a representation of the Christian moral law in its general outlines*. Here again we are encountered by one of the most important disputes which has stirred the mind of the Christian world. Are we to consider Christ as a new legislator? The well known dogma of the Catholics was, that Christ here addresses us first as communicating *consilia evangelica*, and then as an original lawgiver; (v. 20.) and the Council of Trent (Sessio 6. Canon 21.) pronounced this decree: *Si quis dixerit Christum Iesum a Deo hominibus datum esse ut redemptorem, cui fidant, non etiam ut legislatorem, cui obediant, anathema sit*. "The Socinians and Arminians," our author observes—"went still further. While the Catholics said that Christ gave a more profound interpretation of the Old Testament pre-

cepts and subjoined his *consilia evangelica*, the Socinians alleged, that what Christ placed in contrast to the laws of the Old Testament, must be regarded, not as *expository* of the latter, but as *supplementary* and *emendatory*; not merely opposed to *pharisaical misinterpretation*, but to the *Mosaic precepts themselves*; not as *counsels* but as *commands*. And they added, as may be seen in Wolzogen and Vorstius, that the words *επρεθη τοις αρχαιοις*, are not to be taken ablatively, (as some Catholics and all Protestants did) "it was said *by* them of old time," that is, by the Rabbins; but datively, "it was said *to* them of old time," that is, it was enjoined on the contemporaries of the Moses. It was incumbent on these forerunners of modern Rationalism, who restricted the whole redemption of Christ to his prophetic office, to contend for Christ's dignity as a lawgiver.

"We find similar views of this discourse among the Arminians, particularly in Limborch. The Lutheran and Reformed churches, on the other hand, with the exception of a few such men as Calixtus, Pfaff, and Baumgarten, defended the position that Christ here simply develops more profoundly the law of the Old Testament, in opposing himself, not to Moses, but to the Jewish interpreters, and that he is therefore not to be considered as a new legislator, although he interprets and confirms the existing code, and awakens the heart to repentance." p. 38.

In giving his own answer to this question, Tholuck distinguishes. He maintains that the *germ* of every Gospel precept is undeniably found in the ancient law, but he also sustains the position that Christ's injunctions are contrary to the glosses of the Jewish teachers. So far all is well; but we think it unwarrantable when he says that "particular ethical precepts of the Old Testament stand in direct opposition to the highest requisitions of morality." The reference which he makes is to the case of divorce. He further represents the Sermon on the Mount as a continued exhortation to repentance, and as tending to produce a sense of guilt, misery and spiritual need.

And having now given a brief account of the introductory part, we are perplexed with regard to the method which shall be pursued in our remaining strictures. A critical commentary admits of no analysis. We cannot even detail the results of the author's labours. The only alternative is to speak of his general plan, and to illustrate it by one or two specimens. And here we are warned by a fable, significantly quoted by Tholuck from *Jedu Paul*, who compares a certain class of reviewers to one who when asked to describe a human being, produced some finger-nails and a lock of hair.

For an example, we select the exposition of a passage which has given rise to controversy in every age of the church, namely Matt. v. 33-36. I say unto you, swear not at all, &c. The reference is here to Lev. xix. 12. and Exod. xx. 7. The addition, "but shall perform unto the Lord thy vows," is not in the Law, though it is contained in Numb. xxx. 3. and Deut. xxiii. 22. Probably it was appended by the Scribes, in order to restrict the precept to promissory oaths. The spirit of our Lord's interpretation is this: "Formerly, such an honouring of God's name was required, that it was forbidden, under a penalty, to swear *falsely* by his name. I require such a veneration, that you must not swear even truly, and not merely not by God's name, but by any other object of reverence, since hereby the fear of God will be indirectly impaired. Instead of such oaths, use simple affirmation."

The form ὁμῶσαι is not, with Beza and Georgi, to be taken for the imperative, but as the infinitive, dependent on λέγω, which is equivalent to κελενω. Ὀλως is the same with the adverbial phrases, το ὅλον, τὰ ὅλα, τοῖς ὅλοις, and answers to παντη, παντως, &c. it denotes the entireness as opposed to particular parts. See 1 Cor. v. 1: vi. 7: xv. 29. The question is important, what are the particulars to which the word here stands opposed? Are all occasions of even true oaths here meant? and are we to understand the prohibition—"I command you, in no conceivable case, to swear a true oath"? Were this the meaning, the reference to *forswearing* would lose its force. Or does the adverb refer to all the different *kinds* of oaths, as if Christ said: "I forbid, not only oaths by God, but every kind of oaths, even by creatures"? That is, implicitly, every oath whatever. The true force seems to be, "I forbid, not only *in specie*, false-swearing, but *in genere* all swearing." The extent of the prohibition is not wider than that of James v. 12. Now, though the universality of the rule is admitted, the biblical scholar calls instantly to mind numerous cases of allowed exception to such general laws: see vv. 39, 41, 42. Luke vi. 30. Col. iii. 20. In all these cases we must apply the Canon, that "Christ's moral precepts are to be interpreted according to the analogy of the Spirit."\*

Shall we now explain the precept in its most absolute sense, or may we restrict it? This grave question must be decided on the following grounds: (1) the nature of an oath; (2) the connexion of the passage, and (3) the parallel declarations of the New Testament. As to the first, an oath is the expression of

\* See Bergpred. p. 162.

religious feeling; he only can call on God as a witness who believes in God. The pious man, falsely accused, looks to God, as the witness of his innocency: and what the Christian thus inwardly and lawfully feels, may he not utter? The case of Paul is in point: see Rom. ix. 1. 2 Cor. ii. 17. xi. 10. passages which have not the formality of oaths, but which fully exemplify the manner in which a mental appeal is verbally expressed. In the Old Testament oaths are expressly enjoined. Ex. xx. 10. Deut. vi. 13. x. 20. They are badges of true worshippers. Is. xix. 18. lxxv. 16. Jer. iv. 2. Ps. lxxiii. 12. Nay, God himself swears: Is. xlv. 23. Heb. vi. 13. 16.

As to the *connexion* of the passage, the obvious end of our Lord (says Tholuck) is to secure a higher reverence for God, than was enjoined even in the Old Testament. Now this reverence is not impaired by solemn, but by trivial oaths; hence we gather the scope of the text. As to the *parallel expressions of the New Testament*, there are a multitude which militate with the absolute prohibition. Paul appeals to God as a witness, Rom. i. 9. Phil. i. 8. 1 Thes. ii. 5. 10. 2 Cor. xi. 11. 31. Gal. i. 20. 1 Tim. v. 21. 1 Cor. xv. 31. 2 Cor. i. 23. In the last of these, as G. Vossius long ago remarked, God is invoked as an avenger, which, however, is involved in every oath. Add to this, notwithstanding the objections of De Wette, Pott, and Flatt, the fact that Christ himself made use of the oath. For in reply to the formal adjuration of the High Priest, Matt. xxvi. 63, our Lord answers, *Thou sayest it*; and hereby took the oath in the regular Hebrew form, according to which the judge pronounced the formula, and the witness confirmed it by his *Amen*.\* We are therefore constrained to the opinion, that the words must not be taken in their widest and most absolute meaning, but as restricted by other principles of revelation. The only oath which Christ forbids simpliciter, is *such a one as militates with reverence for God*.

The author next proceeds to examine the enumeration which follows, viz. by heaven, by earth, by Jerusalem, by the head; and compares this with James v. 12. which some have used to prove that Christ here intended to forbid these oaths by creatures exclusively. But the very argument of our Saviour against these, evinces that the oath by the Most High was forbidden; namely, that the former involve the latter; the reasoning is *a minori ad majus*. It must be borne in mind, that the Israelites held these minor oaths as less binding. In Matt. xxiii. 16—18. they are found to have been considered entirely nugatory. The

\* See Maimon. de jurejur. c. 11. § 10. Selden. de Syn. II. 11. p. 830.

Talmud expressly teaches that oaths ‘by the heavens,’ and ‘by the earth,’ and ‘by the prophets,’ are not binding, even should the person in the act of swearing think of God; herein revealing the germ of Jesuitical casuistry. And when we learn from Maimonides, that oaths of this kind were not admitted at the tribunals, but only used in common parlance, we are strongly induced to think that our Lord had special reference to the ordinary intercourse of men.

To appreciate the reason here given by Christ, we must glance at the manner of swearing. All ancient nations swore not only by God, but by creatures, and especially by such as had some sanctity, such as sacred symbols, cities, groves, and fountains; by the most remarkable natural emblems of God, such as the sun, the earth, or the elements; by the most valuable members or possessions, as the head, the beard, the hair, the breast, the sword, or the graves of ancestors. The very grammatical construction of the formula in most languages indicated that in case of falsehood the swearer threw himself beyond the protection of God. To render this the more impressive, the person swearing was wont to lay his hand upon some consecrated object; as the Greeks, Romans, and some early Christians, on the altar; the Greeks and Germans on the judge’s mace; the Scandinavians on the bloody ring of their god *Ullr*; the people of the middle age on the relic-box, the missal, the mass-bell, the gospel; the Jews on the Law or the phylacteries; and the Mohammedans on the Koran.\* When an oath was taken by any creature, there was a kind of implied personification. Now our Saviour teaches that whatever is sublime, valuable, or significant in the creature, is derived from the Most High, *quia nulla est pars mundi*, says Calvin, *cui Deus non insculpserit gloriæ, suæ notam*. And as the glory of all things is the glory of God, an oath by the creature is an oath by the Creator, and therefore should never be used in common life. The argument, when fully carried out, is profound, but the Divine Teacher so expresses it, as to command the assent of his humblest hearers. Hebrew poetry had represented heaven as God’s throne, and the earth as his footstool;

\* *Staudlin* has a special treatise on Oaths, Gött. 1824. *Malblanc* is still better. See the literature of the subject in *Fabricius*, biblioth. antiquaria. p. 427—432. On the oaths of the Greeks and Romans, *Valknaer*, Opusc. ed. Lips. T. 1. On the oaths of the Northern nations, *Grimm*, Rechtsalterthümern Th. II. Concerning Jewish oaths, see the Tract. Shebnoth, with the annotations of *Maimonides* and *Bartenoras*, in *Surenhusius*, P. iv. also *Maimonides*, Constitutiones de jurejurando, edited by *Dithmar*, a scholar of *Surenhusius*, Leyden, 1706. *Zeltner*, de jur. vet. Heb. Jena, 1693. *Hattermann* de formulis juram. Jud. Rost. 1701. *Sebast. Schmid*, Fasc. disp. disp. xi. On Mohammedan oaths, *Millius*, de Muhammedismo, Lugd. Bat. 1743, p. 113.



Jerusalem was the centre of the Theocracy; and so truly was the head of man the work and possession of Jehovah, that not even the colour of a single hair was subjected to human power.

Tholuck then proceeds, as his manner is, to the history of the various interpretations. Through this we cannot follow him closely, but we may give some specimens of the rich store which he has provided. In the early church, it must be owned, the opinion that every oath was unlawful prevailed widely. One of the oldest authorities is *Justin*, in *Apol. I. c. 16*. About the beginning of the third century, *Basilides* died as a martyr, because he refused to swear.\* *Irenaeus* confirms the same, but with a limitation in the case of weak brethren.† So also *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Origen*, and *Cyril* of Alexandria. *Basil* peremptorily forbids the oath; so do *Theodoret*, and above all, *Chrysostom*, *Isidore* of Pelusium, *Theophylact*, and *Euthymius*. In the Latin church *Hilary*, upon this place, and *Jerome*. The passages in which the apostle Paul makes use of an oath, are regarded by these fathers as simple expressions of earnestness; excepting only *Theodoret*, who admits an oath in *2 Cor. xi. 10*. *Chrysostom* rests his opinion solely upon the explicit prohibition of the text.‡

It was not until after the fifth century that it was thought heretical to refuse an oath; the practice obtained among various separatists, such as the Cathari, the Albigenses, and the Waldenses. In later times among the reforming sects of Russia, such as the Raskolniks, the Duchoborges, and the Philippones. Within the Catholic church we find *Erasmus* longing for the time when swearing and divorce shall be needless; a wish on which *Beza* animadverts, as an “anabaptist error.” The Reformers were guided into a sound way of thinking on this head. The Anabaptists rejected all oaths, and of the Quakers this was a characteristic. *Barclay’s* language is remarkable: “the question is not, what Paul or Peter did, but what their own Master taught to be done, and if Paul did swear, (which we believe not) he had sinned against the command of Christ.”§

In later times, *Kant* has treated the command of Christ as absolute, and represented oaths as superstitious and absurd; as if (says he) it were left to the witness to choose whether God should punish him in case of falsehood, or not.|| *Pott* and

\* Euseb. hist. vi. 5.

† Iren. adv. haer. ii. 32. Clem. A. Strom. vii. p. 861. Orig. ad Jer. hom. 5. Cyr. de ador. p. 212.

‡ For heathen opinions consult *Tamblichus*, Vit. Pythog. p. 126. See also *Epicetetus*, Enchir. c. 33. 5. *Diog. Laert.* iv. 7.

§ Apology, Prop. 15. § 12.

|| Religion within the bounds of mere reason. 2d A. p. 240.

*Nitsch* coincided in this view of the command. *Staedlin* considers the command as absolute, but regards the oath as allowable in the present state of society. The same interpretation of the text is adopted by *Gutbier*, *Augusti*, *Paulus*, *Henneberg*, *Fleck*, and others, none of whom, however, feel themselves at all bound by the positive precepts of Christ. *Olshausen* and *Stirm* have held the strange opinion (already maintained by *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Bucer*, and *Pellican*.) that the prohibition is absolute, but that it is directed to Christians, with reference to the ideal world of "the kingdom of heaven," and is not intended to regulate the intercourse of believers with the world. This is ably opposed by Tholuck, who denies that there is any thing necessarily evil in a solemn oath, or that our Saviour can be considered as the legislator for a non-existent state of things.

On the other hand, we find oaths, as well as military service, strongly defended even in primitive time. *Tertullian* says, the Christians never swear *per genios Caesaris*, but *per salutem Caesaris, quae est augustior omnibus geniis—et pro magno id juramento habemus*. *Novatus* caused his adherents to swear by the body and blood of Christ that they would never leave him. The canons of the oldest Councils do not absolutely forbid swearing, but only swearing by creatures, and perjury. *Athanasius*, though apparently averse to oaths, swears before Constantine. *Rudius Junicus*, *Nestorius*, and others, abjured their errors before Councils. In the fourth century, *Vegetius Renatus* says of Christian soldiers: *jurant per Deum et Christum et Spiritum sanctum et per majestatem imperatoris*. In the fifth century, the oath appears to have been so fully recognised, that *Hilary*, in his eighty-eighth epistle to *Augustin*, names among the errors of *Pelagius*, that he denied the lawfulness of oaths: and *Pelagius* avows the same opinion, in his epistle to *Deometriadus*, c. 22. The influence of Augustine upon the Catholic church was great in this regard. In his estimation, the prohibition of the text seems absolute, while the expressions of Paul contravene such an exposition. Many indeed (says he) suppose, that the latter are not oaths, because Paul does not say *per Deum*, but *testis est mihi Deus; ridiculum est hoc putare. Tamen propter contentiosos aut multum tardos, ne aliquid interesse quis putet, sciat etiam hoc modo jurasse apostolum; 1 Cor. xv. 31.*: where the very formula commonly used in Grecian oaths is employed.\* And upon Gal. i. 20: *qui dicit ecce coram Deo, jurat utique.*

\* Comp. Serm. 181. c. 5. in 1 John i. T. V. ed. Bened. p. 599.

He explains the absolute form of prohibition, by supposing that as frequent swearing gives occasion for perjury, our Lord used this strong and universal expression to cut off this occasion.\* The sinfulness of the oath, he however denies, as in his exposition of 1 John i. Nay, he says, (c. 9.) "So far as concerns my own case, I make use of the oath; but, as it seems to me, compelled by great necessity. When I perceive that I am not believed without an oath, and that he who hears me cannot be profited by what he believes not, then, deeply weighing and pondering the reasons, I say with the utmost reverence, *Coram Deo*, or *Testis est Deus*, or *Scit Christus sic esse in animo.*" In these views most Catholics concurred, and subsequently most Protestants, including even the Socinians.

The interpretations of those who admit the lawfulness of civil oaths are then rehearsed. Among them there are some which are very surprising. Most agree that oaths are not absolutely forbidden, but they are less explicit in clearing the passage of its grammatical difficulties. *Erasmus* supposes the ordinary methods of swearing to be proscribed. *Luther* supposes Christians alone to be intended. *Calvin* expounds ὅλως as indicating the kinds of oaths; *neque directe neque indirecte jurare per Deum*. *Flacius* and *Glassius* allow a synecdoche, *totum pro parte*. *Rosenmueller* supplies a disjunction: "*plane non jurare, nempe in convictu quotidiano, vel etiam per creaturas.*" *Zuinglius* renders the verb by *dejerare* or *adjurare*. *Socinus*, *Grotius*, *Episcopus* and *Wolzogen*, refer the whole to promissory oaths. But our enumeration already threatens to be tedious and must close here.

The learned and laborious author chooses another outlet from the difficulties of the passage; the soundness of his interpretation we shall submit to the determination of the reader. It is as follows: the word ὅλως admits of being rendered "in general," (*im allgemeinen*,) or by the still more analogous *im Ganzen*, "on the whole," which signifies not only the totality of all the parts, but also a mere generality. And this is justified by the citation of various Greek phrases, and especially, a passage from Aristotle's *Politics*, (II. 2. § 4.) Applying this to the case before us, the sense will be, "I say unto you *in general*, (but without determining in every particular case) swear not."

From this specimen, although it does but partial justice to the original extended exposition, the reader will perhaps be led to form the right conclusion respecting the faults and excellencies of Tholuck's manner. That in which most labour is bestowed

\* See Aug. on Ps. 88. De Mendacio. c. 28. Comp. Wisd. 23, 9.

is the history of interpretations, ancient and modern, which is so complete as to furnish almost an index to all that one could desire to consult. In many respects this is highly desirable, yet we confess that where a passage is simple, or even in difficult places, where the different expositions naturally fall into a few classes, this parade of bibliography, or rather "Litteratur," is both needless and vexatious.

No one can fail to observe that the author goes to work without undue prepossessions, without systematical attachments, and with a conscientious desire to enucleate the kernel of simple Gospel truth. Sworn to no master, and too bold to be afraid even of violating the analogy of faith, he advances opinions which are strictly his own. And it is but just to say, that his views are generally such as we suppose would commend themselves to the majority of American Christians. The system of morals which he deduces from this heavenly discourse, is pure and lovely, infinitely remote from ascetic punctiliousness, and from the subterfuges of a licentious casuistry; while at times he opens to view a new prospect into fields of philosophical speculation, illustrative of the divine truths under discussion, and so beautiful that we are forced to admire, even when we do not feel convinced. The speculative bias, and glowing temperament of the author are ever and anon betraying themselves, even amidst the fetters and frigidity of verbal criticism. There is a fervency, an animation, a heart, about the whole production; and this ardour is by no means fanatical, or merely sentimental, but pure and well founded; in consequence of which the work is relieved from dulness, and the reader, when he has closed it, is still sensible of the moral savour and fragrance for which we often sigh in the perusal of ethical treatises. There are, it is true, diversions into the upper regions of mystical dimness, in which we must suffer our author to soar alone; yet this is the characteristic of the age and nation, and in a higher degree of the individual, and the smile with which the American student will peruse these passages cannot but be respectful and benevolent.

After all, we are not disposed to concede to Dr. Tholuck the praise of distinguished acumen, or discriminating judgment in its highest degrees. When he has at great length kept us in suspense among these glosses of fathers, schoolmen and Reformers, we are somehow disappointed with his own conclusions. And it is not in the precise development of a sentence that we think he most shines. Others among his countrymen excel him in this; there are many who unfold the dogmatical fruits of exegesis far more satisfactorily: but there are none whose expositions are warmed by a more pervading principle of affectionate

piety, and none who happily touch the heart's chords in a greater number of keys, or with richer modulation. Often he is penetrating, and sometimes eloquent, and from his pen the unrivalled language which he uses comes with impressive melting earnestness.

If we were called upon to select the most valuable part of this volume, we should certainly indicate the exposition of the Lord's Prayer. This is highly laboured, and might be advantageously translated and published in a convenient form. It forms a whole of itself, and is easily separated from the body of the work. An Introductory Essay contains, first, the history of various comments and expositions; secondly, a discussion of the time, place, and intention of this inspired model; thirdly an investigation of its alleged identity with certain Jewish or Persian forms; and lastly, a survey of its scope and contents.

In no part of the work, however, does the peculiar genius of Tholuck manifest itself more strikingly, than in the pages which he has devoted to the subject of *Marriage and Divorce*. (Matthew v. 31, 32.) Upon this theme, he speaks with stern and inflexible rigour concerning the licentiousness of modern laws. He regards marriage as a sacred and indissoluble union. He adds, (p. 240.) that the connexion remains "even beyond the grave; whence the Christian Church every where regarded second marriages as of doubtful propriety, and the Apostle enjoins that, at least, the presiding officer of the churches\* should not enter a second time into wedlock." The physical and psychological reasoning of Tholuck upon this whole subject, are among the most singular and at the same time visionary specimens of German philosophizing which we remember to have ever seen. Our limits forbid our even glancing at these. It is admitted that second marriage is explicitly allowed in 1 Cor. vii. 39; yet, our author gathers from the counsel in verse 40, and the directions elsewhere given,† that the avoidance of repeated wedlock was viewed as a higher excellence. He cites the instances of heathen epitaphs, in which it was recorded in praise of a Roman matron, that she lived *univira, innupta*. *Tertullian* (as is well known) denounced all second marriages as wicked, and all but adulterous, and in all the observations of Tholuck (who is himself a widower) we perceive a strong leaning towards the same opinion.

There is something quite remarkable in the vicissitudes of opinion in the Church upon this subject of marriage and divorce. Some early writers, especially *Augustin*, explained the passage

\* Der Leiter der Gemeinden.

† 1 Tim. iii. 2. 12. v. 9.

so as to make idolatry and even covetousness a just reason for divorce. *Epiphanius*, *Clement* of Alexandria, *Chrysostom* and others, give even a greater latitude of meaning to our Saviour's exception. The Roman law, even under Christian emperors continued to be very lax on this point. Separations *communi consensu* were prevalent until the time of *Justin*. Restrictions resembling those of ancient Rome were introduced by *Constantine*; according to which the occasions of legitimate divorce were as follows: on the part of the husband, homicide, poisoning, sacrilege; on the part of the wife, adultery, poisoning, and the trade of illicit indulgence. Under *Theodosius II.* fourteen sufficient causes of divorce were enumerated.

In the Romish Church the basis of all legislation on this subject has been the position that marriage *quoad vinculum* is dissoluble only by death, while the Greek church added conjugal infidelity. But separation *quoad thorum et mensam* was allowed under various pretexts. The Reformers returned very much to simple explication of the Scriptural precepts. *Luther* gives three causes, one of which is physical, and besides this adultery and malicious abandonment. *Calvin* coincides with *Luther* in this particular. *Melancthon*, *Bucer*, and *Zuinglius* give a much wider range to the passages of the New Testament. But we cannot pursue the subject.

It would be easy to give copious extracts of an interesting character from this volume, which abound in very striking episodes, and eloquent bursts of genius; but we should thereby encroach too much upon space which it would be better to occupy with matter more nearly concerning the body of our readers. *Tholuck* is ranked, and justly, among the evangelical and orthodox divines of his country; yet we must never forget, that the system of Christian doctrine which we are accustomed to derive from the Scriptures never shines forth "full-orbed" in any German work. On the profound themes of the Divine Sovereignty, the mediatorial work, and even the method of justification, we find a defect of that clearness and fulness which forcibly impresses us in the English theologians, and which always raises the student far above any doubt as to the precise belief of his author. The language of abstractions and vague sentiment is so natural to a philosophical German, that we could scarcely find one among the evangelical party who does not become obscure and intangible when he advances into the more recondite portions of revelation.

This must even be the case, so long as the inductive method of philosophising is neglected; so long as the school of *Locke*, *Newton*, and *Reid*, is branded with the characters of empiricism

and shallowness; and so long as the vagaries of transcendentalism are regarded as venerable or even safe. Some idea of what we mean may be obtained by any reader who will drop his plummet into the fathomless speculations of Coleridge; though even these are clear and satisfactory when compared with the German depths of darkness. Nay, Kant himself, impracticable as his theories are to every English or American mind, may be said to be logical and convincing, when compared with those who have succeeded him in public regard. The idealism of *Fichte*, if our information is correct, baffles all analysis, and the dreams of *Schelling* and *Hegel* are little else than the vision of an excited imagination, disguised in the garb of philosophical nomenclature. Will the reader bear with us when we say (by way of specimen) that *Fichte* maintains the external world to be the mere creature of the active *Ego*, which has power to picture in itself the image of the universe; so that the outward world is nothing but the limit of our existence, on which thought operates, and that God himself is only the moral order of the universe. As might have been expected, there were multitudes in Germany who could not swallow this. And we beg to be understood as by no means suspecting Professor Tholuck of any such opinions; while we believe that the general principles of his philosophy are equally remote from what is regarded among us as safe and reasonable. One of *Fichte's* colleagues complained to the Saxon ministry, and the work in which the doctrine appeared was confiscated, in 1796 or 1797.

*Schelling* went even beyond this, and maintained a theory of *universal identity*. Rejecting all aid from experience (for Germans consider this as the capital error of English thinkers) he was unwilling to give it a place as even introductory to philosophy. Having with *Fichte*, taken for granted that the subjective *Ego* (we ask pardon for the jargon, but we give it as we receive it) produces the objective *non-ego*, *Schelling* mounted to the *primitive absolute*. That is, he regarded the primitive and infinite *Ego* as the source of all reality and all knowledge. Arrived now, (as *Degerando* well observes) at a degree of abstraction altogether unheard of before, he was able to take a bird's eye view, still more vast, of all science. Pantheism became the fashionable theology or rather a-theology of the day.

Nothing, surely, can be further from our intention than even to hint that Tholuck symbolizes with these sublime visionaries. Yet we presume he would not regard the *method* of philosophizing the "high priori road," with the indignant contempt which every American thinker must experience when such metaphysical "charlatanerie" is attempted to be palmed upon him. Again

we say, however, that Professor Tholuck regards these *dogmas* as untenable. And in the volume before us, no trace is found, on any page, of these or any similar theories, so that the object of our digression will have been accomplished, if the reader shall, with us, feel the necessity of a sober investigation of revealed truth, and an abhorrence of that falsely called philosophy which too often ends in turning the truth of God into a lie. To conclude, we do not hesitate to say, that (so far as our knowledge reaches) no work of equal value to the mere interpreter has ever appeared on the same subject.

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ART. III.—*Bodily Affections produced by Religious Excitement.*

MR. EDITOR—The following letter, it will be perceived, was not originally intended for the press. Nevertheless, the brother to whom it was directed, is so much interested in its contents, and so convinced of its adaptedness to do good, that he cannot refrain from offering it for a place in your miscellany. He differs from the respected writer in one respect. He does not think that such facts as are detailed, ought to be consigned to “oblivion.” They are highly instructive, and ought to be recorded, and remembered for the benefit of the coming generation. He who gives such a simple and striking picture as is here exhibited, of the scenes in question, is a benefactor of the Church of God.

H. A.

*Thomas Cleland*

*Dear Brother*—I have, since your communications came to hand, been so much engaged, in one way or another, that I have had no leisure to attend to your request respecting the revivals of 1800–3. And even now, I feel too much at a loss, and unprepared to do any thing more than to state a few facts, and to give a brief sketch of what fell, mostly, under my own observation. I was not in the ministry at that time, but recollect distinctly, the scenes and passing events of the day. I do not write this for the press, but for your own eye, allowing you the privilege of making what use of it your superior judgment may dictate.



The revival of religion, under consideration, commenced in the southern and western sections of Kentucky, or what is generally known by the Green River country. The principal instruments were the Rev. Messrs. M'Gready, Hodge, Rankin, and M'Gee. The first named individual was in the van. He was a devout, evangelical, powerful preacher; a pupil of Dr. M'Millan, lately deceased. These men, let it be recollected, were the original leaders and abettors of the subsequent irregularities and disorders of the Cumberland Presbytery; which will be noticed hereafter. Previous to this revival of religion, Kentucky, and all this western region, was in a state of great coldness and declension. The country was new, and a heterogeneous mass from all quarters had pressed into it. Presbyterians, both clergy and people, were very formal. Sacramental services were very long, and often irksome, and apparently unedifying, or rather, uninteresting to the large mass of attendants. Communicants were heads of families generally; rarely was there to be seen a young person at the Lord's table. The services were conducted on the plan suggested in our Directory for Worship, Chap. 8. Sec. 6. The Sabbath was occupied, in preaching, *fencing*, and *servicing* the tables, as it was called, from five to eight hours. The communion was held *twice* in the year, in those churches which had stated pastors or supplies, and in many churches only *once* in the year. Such was the state of things when the revival commenced, which was sometime in the year 1799, in the region before mentioned. The population there was sparse at that time, and widely scattered. The work at first, was no doubt, a glorious work of the Spirit of God. The calls for ministerial labour were so great and extensive, that it was impossible for the few clergymen, recently settled there, to supply the demand. This circumstance suggested the idea of *protracted* meetings; that the ministers might have the opportunity of meeting people at one time and one place. There were then no missionaries to go from place to place, and preach to the scattered population. And inasmuch as no neighbourhood had a population sufficient to support so many people as assembled on those occasions, this gave rise to the plan of *camp-meetings*. A grove was selected; "a pulpit of wood," or, as we generally term it, a *stand*, for the clergy was erected. The multitude who intended to be stationary, located themselves, with their wagons, carriages, or tents, in such places around the stand, as their fancy or convenience dictated. The assembly was often so great, that *secondary stands* were erected: the congregation divided, so that three or four preachers were discoursing at the same time, in different parts of the

grove. Here was the commencement of disorder and confusion. The sermon had scarcely commenced, when some one or more would become the subject of *bodily exercise*. This was commonly called the *falling exercise*; or, as it was often said, such and such an one was "*struck down*." I cannot better describe this exercise, than Dr. M'Millan has done, in his letter to President Carnahan. "It was no unusual thing to see a person so entirely deprived of bodily strength, that they would fall from their seats, or off their feet, and be as unable to help themselves as a new-born child. I have seen some lie in this condition for hours, who yet said that they could hear every thing that was spoken, and felt their minds more composed, and more capable of attending to divine things, than when their bodies were not thus affected. As far as I could observe, the bodily exercise never preceded, but always followed, upon the mind's being deeply impressed with a sense of some divine truth." Another *fac simile*, if I may so call it, you may find in Mr. Gulick's letter, written on the Island of KAUAI. See Miss. Herald, vol. 29. p. 404. "Some were seized with a kind of convulsive trembling; and in a few cases, overcome by their feelings, they fell prostrate on their faces, and lay for a length of time weeping in a most affecting manner. And what, in my estimation at least, renders this work the more remarkable is, that many of these very persons, who now felt so deeply, have, for years, been in the habit of hearing the most solemn and alarming truths in the Bible, without the least apparent emotion. But now, without any special cause of excitement or alarm from us, they are thus deeply affected." But now, as I conceive, commenced the principal mischievous measure. When any one would become the subject of this bodily exercise, immediately a group would collect around, and commence singing, and then praying, and then exhorting. Many instances of this kind obtained in different parts of the congregation all at the same time. Hence it happened, that, throughout the assembly, as far as the eye could reach from the stand, there was a continual commotion and confused noise of preaching, exhorting, singing, praying, and shouting going on at the same instant. Many from curiosity or anxiety, were seen continually running from one group to another; so that the multitude was in a perpetual state of commotion and agitation. This scene of things continued day and night, with little or no abatement. The ministry rather yielded up the reins to the multitude, who, being carried away with such a state of things, considered the pulpit of little account, if any at all. Indeed, preaching, especially of the *didactic* character, was considered a great *hinderance* to the pro-

gress of the revival. This sentiment was not confined exclusively to the populace, for some of the leading and most popular preachers gave way to the opinion, that such kind of preaching was rather an interruption to the *great work* that was then going on. Hence the most zealous, arrogant, and enthusiastic of the laity, finding the ministry ready to surrender their posts, very naturally took the whole management of the service out of their hands and controlled it at pleasure. Moreover, if a minister, however evangelical in faith and practice, did not come "*fully up to the mark,*" i. e. if he expressed any disapprobation, ministered any caution, attempted to correct any extravagancies, he was not only set down immediately as being hostile to the revival, but even interrupted and prevented from proceeding in his discourse, by some of the multitude, who commenced singing, or praying, or exhorting, or shouting, which ever was, at the time, found most convenient, by the leaders of such disorder. It was, ultimately, out of this hot-bed of wild enthusiasm and disorder, that there sprung up that fruitful crop of heresy and schism, that afterwards assumed the shape, as well as the name, of *New Lights, Schismatics, Marshallites, Unitarians, and Shakers.* By these heresies, the Synod of Kentucky was deprived of eight members, viz: Marshall and Thompson, (who afterwards recanted their errors and returned,) Stone, Dunlavy, M'Namer, Huston, Rankin and Bowman. All these, except Stone and Bowman, became *Shakers.* For a particular account and description of *bodily exercise*, as they were perpetuated and fostered among the *New Lights*, after they became a *separate* and *distinct* body, being excluded from our church, I refer you to the "*Evangelical Record,*" (p. 217.) written by M'Namer, while one of that party, or perhaps after he turned Shaker. The description is indeed ludicrous, but so far as my knowledge and observation extended, at the time, I cannot detect any thing incorrect in the statement. I do not consider it exaggerated, or too highly coloured. As to these extravagancies, the Presbyterian church by this time began to pause, and look on these scenes, as they were fully acted out by the *New Lights*, with a degree of wonder and disgust. Still there was enough, and more than enough, among ourselves, to make us blush, on a review, and excite in us a desire to hide our mother's nakedness if we could. The work was conducted by Bishop and M'Chord. I return to the revival scenes.

We have seen the origin of *camp-meetings*; which have so much importance now attached to them. They originated in the Presbyterian church from *necessity*; and this necessity, per-

haps, at the time, justified the measure. And so long as they were confined to the circumstances which seemed to call for them, were extensively accommodating and thought to be highly beneficial. The meetings, at first, were awfully solemn; and no doubt much good was done. But when they were extended, and adopted in the more populous parts of the country, where they were attended by thousands and tens of thousands, induced by every motive good or bad, together with the lax and irregular management of them, they exhibited too much the appearance of disorder and confusion which baffled and defied all description. It is proper to remark, however, that the form and arrangements of camp-meetings *now*, differ very much from those in former days. *Then*, the people came together without any shelter but their wagons and their tents, erected where convenience or fancy might dictate. They brought provisions for themselves and horses, and whatever else was thought necessary to their continuance on the ground for many days. *Now*, the plan of temporary buildings of small log huts, in regular order, around the stand, and the space where the congregation is to assemble, is adopted. Order and solemnity generally prevail, and are carefully inculcated and constantly maintained. Formerly, as we have seen, it was entirely the reverse. As for the comparative good or evil attending camp-meetings, I have nothing to say; as my acquaintance with such meetings is very limited. They appear to be lauded or condemned according to the opinions and prejudices of their advocates or opponents.

I confess myself much at a loss to know the proper shape and size of the subject now before me; how far the plan of this history should extend; what to set down, and what to omit. To descend to particulars, and minute circumstances would not be agreeable to the feelings of some yet living; nor do I know that it would be edifying. I will state a few facts and anecdotes, connected with the subject before us. I was licensed to preach in April 1803; both before and after which, I witnessed many things, the detail of which would make a little volume. The largest meeting I attended was in June 1801, at Caneridge, Bourbon county, where B. W. Stone was then pastor. The exercises, as well as the encampment, were such as I have described above. Many appeared to be deeply affected; and many had fallen down. There was much singing, praying, exhorting, &c. at tents, at the meeting-house, and every place where small groups were assembled around one or more of the persons who were "*struck down.*" Subsequently, during the years 1802—3, I witnessed many cases of bodily exercise, the most of which I

have reason to believe, were entirely involuntary; while some others, I thought were the reverse, i. e. either the persons conceited, or fancied themselves under exercise; or desired to be, and therefore sought for it, and yielded to the first impulse, which might, however, have been successfully resisted. Many persons within my knowledge, became hopefully pious, the most of whom continue unto the present, and many have fallen asleep in Jesus. The number of apostacies were much fewer than might be supposed. Indeed, when I look back on those times, I greatly wonder that there were not ten for one. The Presbyterian church suffered greatly, lost many members, more ministers, *proportionably*, than others: but, she continued unconsumed, and was much better prepared, by practical knowledge, and dear-bought experience, for the next revival than she was before. But to our narrative.

A contemporary brother minister, by my request, has given me in substance, the following facts. The first personal knowledge he had of any of the subjects of the revival was in the winter of 1800—1, near the borders of the state of Tennessee. Shortly after the people began to assemble, two or three persons appeared to swoon away, and after lying fifteen or twenty minutes, appeared to be wholly convulsed, some more than others. His attention was particularly called to a young female, who, after sometime lying apparently motionless, began to move her lips. On a near approach, he found himself the subject of her prayer; from which it appeared that she was under the impression, that he had come a considerable distance, and from a cold region, to see the *great work* that was going on in that place. And she prayed fervently that he might not be disappointed. When she recovered, resumed her usual posture, and state of mind, there was great solicitude manifested by her minister and others, to know the result of her exercise, what she had seen, &c. She informed them, that she had seen that they were to have a glorious meeting that day, and the minister (Mr. Rankin) said he had no doubt of it. In that same place, there were others who saw, during their exercises, as they expressed themselves, certain persons, (who were yet unconverted) in the act of preaching and a very great work going on under their ministry; and they appeared to expect it with as much certainty as if it had been revealed to them from heaven. At that time and place, there was a considerable mixture of wheat and chaff. On the one hand, there was manifestly, an anxious disposition to converse on religious subjects, and particularly about the experience and exercises of the heart; a close attention to the preaching of the

word, with apparent desire to profit thereby. There appeared among many a docile temper, a spirit of inquiry, with fervent prayer and cautious zeal. On the other hand, there was a prevailing sentiment, that the subjects of the revival had more than common attainments in evangelical knowledge and piety; that the millennium was just at hand, even at the door; of which fact these extraordinary exercises were certain precursors and evidences. These and such like extravagant notions, were, of course, attended by an arrogant boldness, and self-importance, which did not savour of the religion and spirit of Christ. Social meetings, catechetical instruction, &c. were almost, if not altogether neglected. As before intimated, the intervals between sermons, were occupied by the multitude in various exercises. The ministers took, comparatively, but little interest in conducting the worship, except in the time of preaching, which occupied but a small portion of the twenty-four hours. The rest of the time was spent as before described, singing with great fervor and animation, shaking hands all through the crowd, praying by fifties and hundreds all at the same moment. Such scenes I have often witnessed. Young converts were often seen passing through the assembly, and on the outskirts thereof, exhorting sinners, in a very lofty tone, and peremptory manner, to fly from the wrath to come. Others would pray for hours together, until they were exhausted; and when they could stand up no longer, they would sit down, or recline on some other person, and then pray, or exhort, until completely exhausted; so that nature could exert itself no further. These exercises were greatly applauded, and highly approved, as being not only certain evidences of the gracious state of the individuals themselves, but likewise, as eminently useful and instrumental in furthering the revival. When some of the elder brethren were inquired of about the expediency and propriety of correcting some extravagancies which appeared wild and visionary, their reply was, in substance, that they knew these things were not right; but should they interfere by attempting to rectify them at that time, it might interrupt, if not stop, the revival altogether. Here the ministry, however good the intention, was much at fault. The surrendering up the control and management of the religious exercises into the hands of mere novices, or such as were unskilful and inexperienced, was the very inlet or gateway, to those errors and extravagancies that soon followed. There was, if I mistake not, one general, prevailing, prominent feature attending this revival every where; it was the strange, mistaken disposition, in a very large portion of the people, to undervalue the public means of

religion, and in the place thereof, to promote a kind of tumultuous exercise, in which themselves could take an active part, if not become the principal leaders. Hence, some of these would-be-leaders have been known to lie down and sleep in the time of preaching, and during some of the most serious and solemn addresses, and as soon as the sermon was over, suddenly rise to their feet, and sing, and shake hands, and pray, and exhort, with all the apparent energy of a saint or messenger from heaven. The wild fanatical notions of some were manifested by their believing themselves under obligation to go, according to certain impressions, which they considered to be from heaven; namely, that they must go to certain places, and say and do certain things, and that it must be done and said at a certain time, &c. Many such things as these, which would be tedious and unnecessary to detail here, obtained and prevailed in this revival.

I proceed to relate a case or two, respecting the exercise called the *jerks*. This succeeded sometime after the *falling exercise*; and, I believe, had its origin in East Tennessee, at least it was, to use a commercial phrase, first *imported* into Kentucky from that quarter. It affected the good and the bad, the aged and the young. It was entirely involuntary, dreaded and hated, and even cursed by some; while it was desired, and courted, and highly prized by others. It came on something like the *hiccough*, without any premonitory symptom, and left the subject equally without any sensible effect. During its prevalence, I made several experiments; being a young minister, and inexperienced, I knew not what to do with it. While preaching, I have, after a smooth and gentle course of expression, suddenly changed my voice, and language, expressing something awful and alarming, and, instantly, some dozen or twenty persons, or more, would, simultaneously, be *jerked* forward, where they were sitting, with a suppressed noise, once or twice, somewhat like the barking of a dog. And so it would either continue or abate according to the tenor, or strain of my discourse. The strong sympathy, and intimate correspondence between the mind and body, was fully manifested, by this experiment, producing the exhibition which immediately followed. The first subject of this exercise that attracted my attention, was the pious wife of one of our elders. She was affected by this operation very gently, she felt no pain whatever, but rather the reverse—a pleasing sensation—could give no satisfactory account of its operation. She went to the country village, on a public day, to do a little shopping. I accompanied her on our way home. She was entirely free from any operation of the *jerks*. I determined in my own mind to try an experiment, con-

versed freely and somewhat jocularly with her on secular matters, to divert her mind as far off in that direction as I thought necessary; and then immediately changed the subject to that of a very serious and solemn character. I am certain, not two minutes had elapsed, before she was considerably effected with this exercise. Her body, from the saddle and upwards, appeared to pitch forward half way to the horse's neck, six or eight times in a minute. I was fully satisfied she could not prevent it. My mind became, sometime after, greatly perplexed about this exercise. I could not encourage it, and yet, being a young minister, I was afraid to say any thing against it, publicly, as it had many friends and advocates. At length it was found to be detrimental in various ways; besides interrupting public worship, it deterred many from attending altogether, being impressed with the belief that it was "*catching*." But it was not confined to the public assembly; it invaded the private and domestic circle, while engaged in domestic business, or travelling on the road. The same individual was frequently the subject of it, young and old, male and female, refined and unrefined, the pious and the wicked, were alike under its operation.

Take another singular case, stated to me by Mr. M'Gready. A young man, son of an elder, to avoid attending a camp-meeting in the neighbourhood with the family, feigned himself sick. On the morning of the Sabbath, he continued in bed, until the family had all started for the meeting; he being left alone, except a few small blacks. When thus alone, he congratulated himself on his success, by the deception he had practised on his parents. He raised up his head, and looking all around his room, smiled at the adventure; but lest it might not be complete, lest some one might have occasion to linger, or return, and so he be detected, he resumed his clinical position, covering over his head, and in a short time directed his thoughts towards the camp ground. He fancied the multitude assembling, the services commenced, the bodily exercises, as he had seen them, now in operation. He fancied a certain female now in full exercise; "now she's at it, now she's at it." In a moment he was taken with the same exercise, the *jerks*, was hurled out of his bed, and *jerked* hither and thither, all around the room, up against the wall, and in every fashion. He had never been affected by bodily exercise before, but now found himself perfectly unmanageable. He had heard it said, and indeed witnessed the fact, that *praying* would cause the *jerks* to cease. He tried it; the desired effect followed immediately. He felt no more the effects of the exercise than a person does after the hiccough. He supposed it all a dream, a mere conceit, illusion or something of the kind, resum-



ed his bed, commenced his pranks again, and again was the scene acted over, only a little worse. The same remedy was resorted to, and he again became *in statu quo*. He arose, dressed himself, sauntered about awhile, wanted some employment to pass the time away, bethought himself of a *dog skin* in the vat, that needed *unhairing*, he drew it out, laid it on the beam, rolled up his sleeves, grasped the graining knife, lifted it up to make the first scrape, when lo, it was instantaneously *flirted* out of his grasp, and he was *jerked* back, over logs, against the fence, up and down, until he resorted to his old remedy and again obtained relief. Feeling, as before, perfectly free from any sensible or evil effects, as strong and resolute, and determined, and reckless as ever, he ventured again. He assumed his instrument, and resumed his posture over the subject of his intended operation, when immediately, before he could make one stroke, the whole scene, only, if possible, tenfold worse, was acted over again; it was much more severe, and greatly protracted. The usual remedy, at first, failed; he became alarmed, thought the Lord was now about to kill him, became deeply convicted of his great folly and wickedness; became composed again in body, but now greatly agitated and concerned in mind; called a little black, pointed him to the dog skin, which he was afraid now to approach, directed where to lay it away, returned to his room weeping and crying to God for mercy, and in this condition was found on the return of the family. He shortly afterward obtained a good hope through grace, applied for the privileges of the church, gave this relation of facts to the session, was received, and in the judgment of Christian charity, gave satisfactory evidence by a scriptural experience, and godly living, that he was a renewed man, and redeemed sinner saved by grace.

I will trouble you with only one case more. One evening I rode six miles up Green river, and preached at a Mr. M'Whorter's, in a Baptist settlement. The house was crowded. The people were attentive, until I had finished my discourse and had prayed, and was about to sing the last hymn, but was forestalled by an enthusiastic kind of man, who started a song with a lively tune. Several young women began to *jerk* backwards and forwards. The seats were immediately removed, to afford room and prevent them from being hurt. One young woman had what I would call the *whirling exercise*. She went round like a top, I think at least fifty times in a minute, and continued, without intermission, for at least an hour. It exceeded by far, any thing of the kind I had ever witnessed. I was told she had had the *jerks* nearly three years. She did not appear exhausted;

complained of pain or distress if the bystanders did not continue singing. I became perfectly tired, my preaching seemed to be all gone, and to have been rather in the way, from what took place afterwards. I remonstrated with some of them, and cautioned them. Thus you see this exercise continued, more or less, in one or another place for a long time. It, however, in the general, gradually disappeared, especially from the Presbyterian church; and thus afforded us a very happy relief. I was heartily glad when it was entirely gone. After all these novelties left us, the church, like one enfeebled and exhausted, sunk down into formality and apathy. After she had passed through the fire, she came forth more refined as to doctrine, and soundness in the faith. For nearly twenty years afterwards was she without a revival. But blessed be God, she has recovered, and her borders have been greatly enlarged, and her stakes strengthened; and I trust in God, she will never see and feel such another shock. In her wisdom and experience, I believe such things will never find favour and encouragement again.

The Cumberland business was the last difficulty we had to struggle with. The "Brief History," &c. put out by the Synod of Kentucky, I perceive you have, or I would send you a copy. The facts there detailed I know to be true—I wrote the History as the servant of the Synod; had all the documents; was present at all the meetings which had any concern in that business. I would not have any thing altered except the style and some few typographical errors. The original Cumberland Presbytery was one of our own, formed by the Synod from Transylvania Presbytery, and shortly after dissolved, being incapable of transacting business. M'Gready and Hodge acknowledged and renounced their ecclesiastical aberrations; Rankin turned Shaker; M'Gee and M'Adam were under citation, but never appeared. The whole business was finished by the Assembly in 1809, and in February 1810, the present Cumberlands formed themselves into a separate body. By a subsequent Assembly (I do not recollect when) they have been recognized as other denominations, such as Methodists, Baptists, &c. Some of their ministers are more violent against us than the Methodists. Their preachers are generally illiterate, and a little more than semi-Arminian. They have carried off, by their zeal and name, many members of our church, where we had no ministry. A friend in whom I can confide, lately informed me, that they are very friendly in Missouri; co-operate with us heartily in the Christian enterprises of the day; boldly and successfully combat heresy; and appear to manifest great anxiety, and desire to become, in some way, united with us. But this cannot be,

from their present aspect as a body. Their literary character, as well as orthodox standard, is too low and uncertain. Should it become expedient to branch out, in extending the history of the revival, (as I wrote to you before) it will be necessary to trace, first, the *New lights*, the sphere of whose operations was, in the eastern section of Kentucky, by Marshall, Stone, &c. The Rev. W. L. McCalla collected materials for their history before he left Kentucky, but I know not what he did with them. Out of these heretics soon sprung the Shakers, whose history is familiar. The Cumberland is a distinct branch altogether, gradually rising and growing out of the disorders which obtained in the Green River country, or further down in Kentucky, and in West Tennessee, called Cumberland, I suppose, from the river of that name, running by Nashville. This accounts for the name "Cumberland Presbytery," at first given to that section of our Synod, and subsequently adopted by the present Cumberlands, as they are generally called. In their worship, they are considered more noisy and disorderly than the Methodists. In short, to use a homely phrase, they have Presbyterian *warp*, but Methodist *filling*.

My dear brother—With this hasty sketch, meager and unsatisfactory I fear it will be, I must stop. I do not know what more I can do. The whole subject, with all its bearings and relations, would require a little volume. And after all, were the whole written and published to the world, still the inquiry forces itself upon my mind, *cui bono?* Those singular transactions have so long passed away; the times so changed; the church gone so far ahead; Christian enterprise so active and extended; the era so new and wonderful; all things considered, would it not be as well to let those unhappy, mistaken steps and observations, pass on to oblivion as fast as possible? I yield, however, to your better judgment. Make what use you please of this rapid and hastily written sketch. I have no leisure to transcribe it. Look over its imperfections and blunders. For the general aspect, or substratum, of matters and things, as they existed among us at the time he wrote, I refer you to the second Epistle of Rev. David Rice, see *Memoirs*, by D. Bishop, p. 340. The notes, over the signature of *Anon.* were from the pen of Dr. J. P. Campbell. For details, I refer you to what I have here written, in connexion with the *Evangelical Record*, before mentioned.

For Cumberland Presbyterians, I refer you to the Brief History. It is a document containing facts that ought to be preserved, and more generally known. If any thing more should be needed, do not fail to let me know, and every demand

for the good of the cause, shall be faithfully and cheerfully complied with, as far as within my power.

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#### THE JERKS.

As the facts, in relation to these bodily agitations are somewhat remarkable, we deem it expedient to make some addition to what is stated above, by our worthy correspondent.

The phenomenon of swooning, or suddenly falling or sinking down, under religious exercises, has not been uncommon in times of great excitement, and under very impassioned preaching. Such occurrences were very frequent under the ministry of Whitefield and Wesley; and in this country, during the great revival which took place under the preaching of Whitefield, the Tennents, Blairs, &c. such appearances were of frequent occurrence. The same was remarkably the fact at Cambuslang and Kilsyth in Scotland, during the extraordinary religious excitement which took place in those towns, early in the last century. We have also witnessed such effects on the body, as occurring very commonly, in the meetings of the Methodists and Baptists in the south and west. In the cases which have fallen under our observation, the effect on the body was entirely involuntary. Sometimes it was preceded by a universal trembling of the whole frame; but at other times, the falling was as sudden as if the person had been struck with lightning. In some cases, there followed a convulsive motion of the limbs; but most frequently the patient lay motionless, as if in a swoon. And the only remarkable difference between these paroxysms, and those of common syncope, is that, in the former, the person is not unconscious of what is said and done in his presence.

But the bodily agitation called the *jerks* is a very different affection; and the only appearance known to us, which bears a resemblance to it is the jumping exercise in Wales, of which Dr. Haygarth has given an account in his treatise "On the Effect of the Imagination in the cure of bodily diseases." The same facts are referred to in Sidney's Life of Rowland Hill. This extraordinary nervous agitation commenced, as stated by our correspondent, in East Tennessee, at a sacramental meeting; and we have been informed, that on that day several hundreds of persons, of all ages and sexes, were seized with this involuntary motion. It was at first almost uniformly confined to the arms, and the motion proceeded downwards from the elbow, causing

the arm to move with a sudden jerk, or quick convulsive motion, and these jerks succeeded each other, after short intervals. For some time no religious meeting was held, in which this novel involuntary exercise was not exhibited by more or less of the audience in that part of the country where they originated. And, generally, all those who had once been the subjects of it, continued to be frequently affected, and not only at meeting, but at home, and sometimes when entirely alone. After the commencement of the jerks, they spread rapidly in all directions. Persons drawn by curiosity to visit the congregations where they existed, were often seized, and when they returned home, they would communicate them to the people there. But, in some instances, they occurred in remote valleys of the mountains, where the people had no opportunity of communication with the infected. In East Tennessee and the south western part of Virginia, their prevalence was the greatest; and in this region, persons of all descriptions were seized, from the aged, gray-headed preacher, down to children of eight or ten years of age. Soon, however, the "exercise" began to assume a variety of appearances. While the jerks in the arms continued to be the most common form, in many cases, the joint of the neck was the seat of the convulsive motion, and was thrown back and forward to an extent, and with a celerity, which no one could imitate, and which to the spectator was most alarming. Another common exercise was dancing, which was performed by a gentle and not ungraceful motion, but with little variety in the steps. During the administration of the Lord's Supper, in the presence of the Synod of Virginia, we witnessed a young woman performing this exercise for the space of twenty minutes or half an hour. The pew in which she was sitting was cleared, and she danced from one end to the other; her eyes were shut, and her countenance calm. When the dancing terminated, she fell, and seemed to be agitated with more violent motions. We saw another who had, what was termed, "the jumping exercise;" which resembled that of the jumpers in Wales. It was truly wonderful to observe the violence of the impetus with which she was borne upwards from the ground: it required the united strength of three or four of her companions to confine her down. None of these varieties, however, were half so terrible to the spectator, as that which affected the joint of the neck. In this, it appeared as if the neck must be broken; and while the bosom heaved in an extraordinary manner, the countenance was distorted in a disgusting way.

Besides the "exercises" already mentioned, there were some

of the most curious and ludicrous kind. In one, the affected barked like a dog; in another, they boxed with fists clenched, striking at every body or thing near to them. The running exercise was also one of the varieties, in which the person was impelled to run with amazing swiftness. There were many other singular motions in imitation of persons playing on the violin, or sewing with a needle, &c. &c.

The most remarkable circumstance in relation to these various exercises was, that a person affected with a peculiar species of the jerks, coming into a congregation where that had not been experienced, would commonly communicate it to those who had been affected with exercises of a different kind. Thus, a lady from Tennessee, who brought into a certain part of Virginia the barking exercise, immediately was imitated by certain of those affected with the jerks, who had never seen any thing of this sort before. These nervous agitations were at first received as something supernatural, intended to arrest the attention of the careless multitude, and were therefore encouraged and sustained by many of the pious; but after a while they became troublesome. The noise made by these convulsive motions in the pews was such, that the preacher could not be composedly heard; and in several of the exercises the affected person needed the attention of more than one assistant. Besides, nervous agitation or falling was so easily brought on by the least mental excitement, even at home, that many who were the subjects of the jerks, became weary of it; and, in some cases, avoided serious and exciting thoughts, lest they should produce this effect. It is remarkable, however, that they all united in their testimony, that in the most violent and convulsive agitations, as when the head would rapidly strike the breast and back alternately, no pain was experienced; and some asserted, that when one arm only was affected with the jerks, it felt more comfortable than the other, through the whole day. Perhaps, this was imagination. In some places the persons affected were not permitted to come to the church, on account of the noise and disturbance produced. The subjects were generally pious, or seriously affected with religion, but not universally. There were cases in which careless persons, and those who continued to be such, were seized. The dread of the jerks was great in many, both religious and careless, and upon the whole, the effect produced by them was very unfavourable to the advancement of religion. All, however, were not of this opinion. Some who had much experience of them, continued to speak favourable of their effects.

We have the pleasure of annexing to our account, the statement of an intelligent and respectable physician, who appears to have paid much attention to subjects of this kind. The opinion of such men is valuable, as they are better acquainted with the physiology of man, than other persons.

#### THE JERKS.

This affection I have repeatedly witnessed in the State of Illinois in the years 1822-3-4. The persons subject to it were principally females in the humbler walks of life, natives of North Carolina and Tennessee. Young females (say from thirteen to thirty years old) of sanguine and nervous temperament were more addicted to it than others. It is equally prevalent among Methodists and Cumberland Presbyterians. Their discourses are generally passionate addresses, first to the fears and secondly to the sympathies of their hearers. At the conclusion of these addresses hymns are sung with great animation, the leaders passing through the congregation shaking their hands. The jerks or falling generally commences at the conclusion of the sermon and increase during the singing. Different persons are variously affected: some rise to their feet and spin round like a top, while others dance till they fall down exhausted. Some throw back their heads with convulsive laughter, while others drowned in tears break forth in sighs and lamentations. Some fall from their seats in a state of insensibility and lie for hours without consciousness, while others are affected with violent convulsions resembling epilepsy. Those habituated to the affection are generally attacked under the circumstances above detailed, but I have seen some persons who had become so irritable that the least mental excitement would produce the paroxysm. Others appeared to be affected from sympathy. I have seen several young women of the same neighbourhood, who were always attacked at seeing one of their number with the paroxysm. I have seen others who would be instantly attacked on seeing any person with the affection without having any previous mental excitement. During the *convulsive paroxysm*, recollection and sensation are but little impaired; after continuing a certain period, the person generally falls into a state of stupor very much resembling that subsequent to epilepsy. Yet the animal functions are not much impaired. The pulse is natural. The temperature that of health throughout the paroxysm: after it has subsided, there is soreness of the muscles and a slight dull pain of the head, which soon pass away.

From the sex of those most subject to the affection, the time

of life when they are most susceptible of it, the condition they occupy in society, the causes which excite it into action, and the effect produced by the paroxysm, I was led to the conclusion that it was a nervous disease brought on by continued mental excitement, and protracted by habit, that after it has once become habitual from long continued mental excitement, sympathy will be sufficient to call it into action without mental excitement.

Many of the subjects of this affection were addicted to hysterics; and *all*, persons easily affected by any thing exciting the natural sympathies.

I have omitted to mention one fact I have often witnessed, viz: that *restraint* often prevents the paroxysm. For example: persons always attacked by this affection in churches where it is encouraged, will be perfectly calm in other churches where it is *discouraged*, however affecting may be the service, and however great the mental excitement. Some of them have told me that such was the fact, and as these were the more intelligent of those addicted to such affections, I doubt not the truth of what they said.

#### REFLECTIONS.

1. The first reflection which is suggested by the preceding accounts is, that the physiology of the human system is very imperfectly understood.

2. The second is, that an irregular action of the nervous system produces often very astonishing appearances.

3. Religious excitement carried to excess is a dangerous thing. Enthusiasm is the counterfeit of true religion, and is a species of insanity.

4. In revivals of religion, badly regulated, there may be much extravagance, and yet the work in the main may be genuine. The wise will discriminate, and not approve or condemn in the lump.

5. Pious men and women are imperfect in knowledge and often form erroneous opinions which lead them astray. Bodily affections however, are no evidence of error or enthusiasm.

6. Such bodily affections as are described in the foregoing narratives, are no doubt real nervous diseases, which do not destroy the general health.

7. All such things tend to the discredit of religion, and should be prevented or discouraged.



*Archibald Alexander*

ART. IV.—*Evidences of a New Heart.*

MAN was, in the beginning, created in the image of God, which consisted in “knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness.” By the fall, the human race have lost that crown of glory with which the first man was adorned, and have become corrupt and blind.

The chief end of the Gospel is to restore man to holiness, and thus to make him happy. To bring about this, much was requisite. Sin must be atoned for, and a new creation must take place. The first of these ends was effected by the one offering of Jesus Christ, as a lamb to take away the sins of the world. The great work is finished, and there remaineth no place for any other sacrifices; the way into the most holy is now laid open; that is, a door is opened by which believers, who are sprinkled with the blood of Christ, can enter into the highest heavens. But the restoration of the image of God by the new creation, is a work which is carried on from age to age, upon all who become heirs of salvation; and is now carried on by the conversion of sinners through the preaching of the word of life.

If man were made perfectly holy by his regeneration, there would be no difficulty in knowing certainly, when this good work had been wrought; or if there were no counterfeits of piety, or if the heart of the renewed was not still in a measure deceitful, it would be easy for the children of God to arrive at a satisfactory assurance, that they had passed from death unto life; and there would remain no ground on which the unconverted could persuade themselves that they had been the subjects of this change. But still, although difficulties stand in the way of complete assurance, and many deceive themselves with the name, the form, and the counterfeits of piety; yet there are marks of regeneration so plainly laid down in Scripture, and presented in so many aspects, that the honest and diligent inquirer will not be disappointed in obtaining such a degree of comfortable evidence of the favour of God towards him, as will be of more value than all the treasures of this world. And the hypocrite, or formalist, may, by the application of Scripture marks, determine, that he is still “in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity.” It may be stated as a truth, that if the truly pious remain in distressing doubt respecting their spiritual state, it is owing to some want of diligence in searching

their own hearts, and comparing them with the Word of God; to some erroneous opinions which they have imbibed; to some melancholy humour in their constitution; or, they are fallen into some woful declension, or they have been overcome by some powerful temptation which has produced a sense of guilt in the conscience, and spread darkness through the whole soul. And on the other hand, there is no unregenerate man, however amiable, moral, and benevolent he may be, who does not constantly carry about with him clear, legible marks of his being in an unconverted state. All that is wanting to bring conviction to his mind, is a conscientious application of the Word of God to his heart. Every deceived soul is, therefore, its own deceiver. No man with the Scriptures in his hands, is under any necessity of remaining in error, on this all-important subject.

From what has been said, it is obvious, that it is a very useful and necessary thing to understand what the Scriptures teach on this point. And as some aid may be afforded to the ignorant, to the doubting, and to all who are not familiar with their Bibles, by drawing out, and clearly setting forth the testimonies of the Word of God, in regard to this matter, we have attempted to render some assistance in this way, in the essay which is here presented to our readers, and to which their candid and earnest attention is requested.

On this subject, so vital to our best interests, we shall not indulge in speculation, nor even lay any stress on human reasoning, but endeavour clearly to exhibit what the Scriptures teach, with all simplicity; and as a systematic method can be of no service in this case, we shall not resort to it in communicating the truths which we wish to address to the reader.

We have already observed, that the new creation is intended to restore to the human soul, the lost image of God. We now remark, that the holy law of God furnishes the most correct standard, by which to judge of the reality of this renewal of the mind. The law is the perfect measure of the creature's duty. Conformity to the law is the exact image of God; for the law is a transcript of his moral attributes. Now conformity to the law consists, in "loving God with all the soul, and heart, and mind, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves." If then, our hearts have been brought to love God and our neighbour, we have been renewed in the spirit of our minds; for, in our carnal, which is our natural state,—"the heart is enmity against God and not subject to his law." But, lest any, who are not renewed should persuade themselves that they possess this characteristic, let us mention some of the prophecies and evidences of the love of God.

1. *It must be sincere and genuine love*, felt in the heart, and not a mere animal commotion, or a mere profession of the lips. Sincere love stands opposed, both to that which is pretended, and to that which is spurious. It is easy to say with the mouth, 'I love God,' but our love must not be *in word*, but *in deed*, and *in truth*. Our love must be a real emotion of the heart, and not a dissembled affection.

But it must also be genuine. A man may call any feeling by the name of love. He may experience a feeling of exhilaration diffused through his frame, he knows not how; and knowing that he did not produce it by any voluntary effort of his own; and, observing, that it came on him suddenly after much distress; and that it causes him to feel happy, he may call it, *the love of God*, when it may be nothing more than a flash of joy, produced by some physical change in the animal frame, especially in the nerves. We know that there are natural causes which will produce such effects. Or it may be nothing more than an exercise of self-love, arising from some persuasion that the danger which he supposed to be hanging over him, has passed away. As if a man under conviction of sin should imagine, that he heard a voice saying, *thy sins are forgiven thee*, or should have a text of scripture of similar import, to occur to his mind, he may be led, without examination, to think that he is a converted man; and may feel a joy proportioned to his former sense of danger, or desire of happiness. Now, we do not deny that something like this may accompany a sound conversion, yet it is manifest that all that has been mentioned may be experienced without any change of heart—it may be nothing but nervous exhilaration, or the gratification of self-love, neither of which surely are evidences of piety. And O that they who are the guides of immortal souls would duly consider this, and not become accessory to the delusion of multitudes!

2. *Love to God must be founded on a just view of his character, as revealed in the Scriptures.* It must be love to God, not only as good to all, but as just and holy; we must love God as sin-avenging, as well as sin-pardoning. What we mean is, that the object of our esteem and love must be the whole character of God, as he has revealed himself to us in his word. If we have true love to God, we shall rejoice that such a Being exists, and that he is what he is; we shall delight to meditate on all his perfections; the awful as well as the amiable. Now, this is only saying, that our love must be fixed on the true and living God, and not on an idol; for is it not most manifest, that if we love him not in his true character, however strong our affection, it is directed to another being—to an idol of our own imagination; and it matters not whether our idols be material or spiritual.

3. *Our love to God must be the predominant affection of our hearts.* Whether it is possible to exercise love to God in any degree, while other affections have the ascendancy, it is not necessary to inquire; for the Scriptures are most express in declaring, that no other love but that which is supreme, and prevails over every conflicting passion, will be of any avail. *He that loveth father or mother more than me,* says Jesus, *and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.* And the same thing is expressed in the strongest possible manner, in another place. *If any man come unto me and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.* The young man who came to Christ was put to this test, which, with all his amiable qualities and high professions, he was unable to endure. And Christ recognizes the same principle in his solemn interrogation addressed to Peter: *Simon, son of Jonas, loveth thou me more than these?* Indeed, if this were not the fact, the love of God would not form and mould the character and govern the life of Christ's disciples; for every one knows that the strongest affection does always govern. This is a test to which all must come; and if we are found wanting, when tried by this touch-stone, our hearts are still unrenewed—the heart of stone remains, with all its hardness.

4. Again, *true love is constant.* The soul may be agitated by feelings which are attended with much greater commotion, and which may be accompanied with more extatic joy, but these are transient; like the morning cloud and early dew, they pass away. But the love of God in a renewed heart, takes root and abides. Temporary faith is not distinguished from that which is saving, by the liveliness of the feelings or the fair external appearance, for the seed which fell on the stony ground grew up as quickly and flourished, for a while, as luxuriantly as that on good ground. Its defect was want of root, and therefore it soon withered away. In revivals of religion it has often occurred, that some of those who seemed to feel the most, and who attracted most attention, after a while, decline and turn back. It is he that persevereth to the end, that shall be saved. We lay it down, therefore, as one property of true religion, that it is permanent. But this constancy of love is not at all inconsistent with great vicissitudes of feeling, and frequent fluctuation of frames. When the soul mourns an absent God, love is not extinct; nor its evidence obscure; true love discovers itself as manifestly, by uneasiness, on account of the absence of a beloved object, as by joy at his presence. When many seem to begin well, and to run well in the way which leads to Zion, be not too sanguine of the event.

Many blossoms drop and produce no fruit, but where the heart is really renewed, there it will appear by a steady continuance, and gradual progress in piety. They, therefore, who have been long travelling on the pilgrimage to the new Jerusalem, have much better evidence of piety, other things being equal, than they who are just setting out.

5. *Genuine love to God inspires the soul with a desire to please God.* This is the nature of love, that it desires a return of affection from the person beloved. This leads to the use of every means to please that person. On this principle is founded the injunction of Christ, *If ye love me keep my commandments;* and the declaration, *He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.* Now what would seem to be easier than to know, whether, indeed, we were habitually desirous of pleasing God, by keeping his commandments? If we truly love God, this desire will have more influence over our conduct than any other.

6. *But love to God also produces a fear of offending Him.* The pious man is characterized by *being in the fear of the Lord, all the day long.* *He feareth always,* not with a slavish dread, but with a holy reverence. He fears to give offence. And when he is convinced that he has in any way done what he habitually wishes to avoid, it is to him a subject of unfeigned grief. He mourns in secret places, and obtains the blessing which Christ has promised to Zion's mourners. He sorrows after a godly sort, and finds in his own experience that godly sorrow is efficacious to work repentance unto life, or a *change of mind* which is connected with eternal life.

7. *The desire of communion with God, and joy in his presence,* are strong evidences of love to God. The ardour of this desire for the sensible and comfortable presence of God is various. Sometimes it is exceedingly great, so that it is expressed, by the panting of the heart after water-brooks—by longing, thirsting, and even fainting. But when there is *a new heart,* it will give indication of its heavenly origin by pointing its desires towards God. How can that soul be renewed, which is unconscious of all such desires? Yea, that does not feel them daily? We might discourage and distress the timid Christian, by laying down the sensible enjoyment of communion with God as an inseparable attendant on piety, (and we must not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax,) but certainly, we must insist on *the desire, the habitual desire* of such communion, as an evidence of piety, which all must be conscious of, except those who are fallen asleep, or gone far back in the way of declension. And whatever may be the real condition of these back-

sliders in the sight of God, there are no evidences of piety applicable to them while they remain in that state.

We need say nothing about the joy experienced from the sensible manifestation of God's presence, and from the light of his countenance lifted up on the soul; for there our aid is not needed, for the soul enjoys already a blessed assurance of the divine favour, and is not only conscious of loving God, but feels *the love of God* shed abroad in the heart, and can say in the language of the spouse, *my beloved is mine and I am his*.

8. The last particular which we shall mention is, *the fixed purpose and ardent desire to glorify God*. Love identifies the honour and interest of the person beloved with our own. It is even possible that we should love another with an affection so strong, that in our zeal for his honour we almost forget ourselves. Such a strength and fidelity of attachment has been observed in inferiors towards their superiors. But if even there is room for such a sacrifice, and a reasonableness in it; it is when God, our Creator, Benefactor, and Redeemer is the object of our love. This love to Christ has, indeed, a constraining power. It makes us willing to be any thing, or suffer any thing, that God may be glorified in us, and by us, living and dying.

The desire to glorify God then, with our bodies and spirits, which are his, which he hath bought with a price, is the best evidence of love to God; and consequently the best evidence of *a new heart*. If there be a new heart without this aim at God's glory, it is not from the regeneration of the spirit. It may, like Saul's be *another heart*, but the love of God is not in it; and wherever the renewing spirit comes, there is love, for the fruit of the spirit is *love, joy, peace, &c.* This same heart causes us to rejoice when God is glorified, whoever may be the instrument; and to mourn when his name is dishonoured. *Rivers of waters*, says David, *run down mine eyes because they keep not thy law*. The Lord directed the man clothed with linen, and having a writer's inkhorn, *to set a mark on the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done*. That heart which thinks nothing, and cares nothing for God's glory is a base, worldly, selfish heart, and has no resemblance to the *new heart* of the Gospel.

Christ's kingdom on earth is that in which the glory of God is more involved, than in any thing within our reach. Every renewed heart loves the church, and desires, and rejoices in its advancement. Every article of intelligence which relates to the conquests of the Redeemer, the triumphs of the cross and the conversion of men is cheering to his spirits, and grateful to his heart. For this cause he is willing to labour, to suffer, and to

die. Whatever of talents, of learning, of influence, of wealth, God has given him, he considers all as consecrated to the service of God. And his language is, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?*

There are, indeed, many nominal Christians, and many strict professors, who feel differently; who will scarcely stir a finger, or give a dollar, to promote the kingdom of Christ. But we read in the Scriptures, that while many are called, few are chosen; that but few of those who seek to enter in at the strait gate are able to find it; that many draw nigh to God with their lips while their heart is far from him. We judge no man in particular, but, lay it down as a decisive mark of a renewed heart, that the man will make God's glory the chief end of all his actions and plans; and that the advancement and prosperity of this object will be very dear to him and will greatly rejoice his heart.

Here we might finish our labour, for he who truly loves God has every other mark of piety, and undoubtedly is possessed of a new heart; but as the Scriptures present this subject under many different aspects, it will be proper to give some other views of it, that every one may have the best opportunity of determining what his own spiritual condition is.

A sincere love of the truth, and inflexible attachment to it under all temptations to deny or abandon it, is one evidence of a new heart. The new man is born of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God; is begotten by the word of truth, and sanctified, and guided, and comforted by the truth, it is natural for him therefore to love the truth. It is the food by which he lives. It is sweet to his state, sweeter than the honeycomb, and more desirable than fine gold. There is a sweet accordance between the truth of God, and the feelings of the new heart. His language is, *O, how I love thy law!* it is my meditation day and night. *He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ he hath both the Father and the Son. I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in the truth.* The real Christian will part with life sooner than relinquish the truth of God. If all should forsake it, yet by the help of God, will not he. This then is his characteristic.

The apostle Paul declares, that, *If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.*

Here we may observe that this change cannot take place in a person arrived at the years of discretion, without his observation. In the *new creation* old things are passed away, and all things are become new. Now as this complete revolution takes place in a man's own mind, of all the exercises of which he must

be conscious, it is clear that he cannot have been the subject of such a new creation, without some knowledge of the fact. The renewed man may, indeed, sometimes doubt whether what he has experienced is a genuine conversion, but he cannot doubt that he has undergone a change. He cannot but remember the various impressions, convictions, conflicts, discouragements, heart-troubles; and also the light, the truth, the hopes, the sweet meltings of soul, the feelings of gratitude, love, and confidence, which have at one time or another occupied his mind. Those, therefore, who cannot look back to a great change in their views and feelings, either gradual or sudden, ought not to entertain, for a moment, the hope that they have received *a new heart*.

To this there is one exception. They may be some now, as in former times, who have been sanctified from their birth, or from the womb. But such cases, when they occur, will carry with them their own evidence. From childhood, from the earliest dawn of reason, such persons will manifest such a love of divine truth, such a tenderness of conscience, such a readiness to perform all known duties, such a fondness for the people and ordinances of God, such a delight in hearing of Christ and heaven, and such an exemption from the common predominant vices of children, such as lying, vanity, envy, ill-will, attachment to their own interest, that the *new creation*, although we cannot observe its commencement, will show itself by the light, beauty, and order which surround it, and are impressed upon it. When any person, then, has now, and always has had, a heart to love God, and delight in his service, he may without scruple believe, that this good work was wrought upon him prior to his recollection. But let no one deceive himself with a vain delusive hope, who has only been preserved from gross immoralities, and has often been the subject of religious impressions from his youth up; for it may be presumed, that this is the case with the majority of those who have had the advantages of a religious education. Let every one, then, look back with serious impartiality, and inquire what change of views and feelings he has experienced, which corresponds with the *new creation*, in which old things have passed away, and all things have become new.

The same apostle, in his epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, uses language of this sort, in relation to this change; *And that ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind: And that ye put on the new man, which after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which*



is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him. And again, he describes those who are made alive and saved by grace, as persons created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Among the deeds of the old man, specified as those which must be put away are, *lying, cherished anger, stealing, corrupt communications, bitterness, wrath, clamour, evil-speaking, and all malice.* Now, from these passages we learn, that the Christian has become a new man, in principle and practice; and that a reformation of life, by which he turns away from all his former vices, of whatever kind and degree they might be, is an essential thing in his character, according to the Scriptures. Those professors, therefore, who retain any of their sins, and habitually practise them, secretly or openly, have not put on the new man, and are not renewed in the spirit of their minds. As the "putting off the old man" is nothing else than forsaking all our former sins, of every sort, so "putting on the new man" is acquiring the habits and exercising the graces of a holy life. These are too numerous to be here specified, the principal are *faith, love, humility, charity, meekness, temperance, thankfulness, prayer, &c.* Now let every one who wishes to decide whether he has a new heart, turn to those passages where the fruits of the Spirit, and Christian graces are enumerated, and ask himself, as he reads each particular, does my heart produce this fruit? Let us be assured, that religion is the same now that it was in the days of the apostles. And if our religion will not bear the scrutiny of Scripture marks, it is false; and our hearts are not renewed.

Another evidence of a renewed heart, which is much insisted on by the apostle John, and is indeed laid down by Christ himself, as a distinguishing mark of a true disciple, is *love to the brethren.* *He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother abideth in death.* And Christ says, *These things I command you, that ye love one another. Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* Without this brotherly affection, all gifts, and all knowledge, and all sacrifices, even of all our goods, and life itself, will profit nothing.

Some think that this is so low a mark of piety, that there is danger of announcing it, lest unconverted men should be led to think well of their condition. But our wisdom is, implicitly to follow the Scriptures. If Christ and his apostles have insisted especially on this evidence of piety, we need not be afraid to depend

on it as certain. But although unrenewed men may and will deceive themselves, by supposing that they possess this and other marks of piety, the children must not be deprived of their allotted food, because dogs snatch at it. The truth, however, is that there is no characteristic of piety of which carnal men are more utterly destitute than of love to the brethren. They may love them with a natural affection because they are relatives, or be pleased with them because they are amiable, or be attached to them because they do not stand in the way of their ambition; or because they receive benefits from them; they may, moreover, feel respect for the consistency of their religious character, but they have no complacency in their holy character—they feel no fervent affection for them because they are Christ's. On these accounts they are hated of the world. But the new heart cleaves to the people of God, like Ruth to Naomi, who said, "*thy people shall be my people and thy God my God.*" There is among sincere Christians, a peculiarly strong, tender, and pure affection. No bond on earth is so close and sacred. They are *taught of God to love one another with a pure heart fervently.* Such is the strength of this love that he who feels it is ready to lay down his life for the brethren. This renders the communion of Christians delightful. They have the same Saviour, and being animated by the same spirit, their mutual intercourse is sweet, and they continually endeavour not to please themselves, but their brethren for their good. They "weep with them that weep, and rejoice with them that rejoice," and are "kindly affectioned one to another, in honour preferring one another." If it be said, that few possess this temper, then we must conclude, that there are few real Christians. If brotherly love waxes cold in any church or society, most certainly true religion is at a low ebb in that society. Love of a party is a quite different thing. Brotherly love embraces with kind affection Christians of other denominations, and is exercised towards the poor and afflicted, as well as the rich and prosperous. It is attended also with good works. It does not say, *go, be fed and clothed*, but is ready to administer to the wants of Christ's needy followers. The strongest recommendation of this grace is found in the words which Christ will address to his disciples at the last day. *Then shall the king say to them on his right hand, come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was an hungered and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Verily I say*

unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Another characteristic of a new heart is, trust in God, and submission to his will. *Thy will be done* is the sincere language of the pious heart, at all times, and when heavy afflictions press on the soul, it may cry out in agony, *if it be possible let this cup pass from me*: but soon it rejoins, *not my will, but thine be done*. And when sore bereavements deeply wound the tenderest feelings of nature, the language of the renewed heart is, *"It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good."* The strokes of God's chastising rod irritate the proud, and sink others into hopeless sorrow, but they drive the pious closer to his God; for as he knows by experience that there is shelter under the wings of his mercy, he flies thither as to a safe refuge.

But that mark on which the Scriptures lay the greatest stress, is one of a general nature, which includes all others, it is *a good life*. *The tree is known by its fruits*. A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good. In this sense a man is justified by works, for he must prove the reality of his faith by his works; for faith without works is dead. God's redeemed sons are *zealous of good works*. *"Beloved,"* says the apostle John, *"follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God; but he that doeth evil hath not seen God. Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected."* All they that are in Christ, *"walk not after the flesh but after the spirit."* Christ says, *"If ye love me keep my commandments."* *"If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love."* *"He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit."* *"Herein is my father glorified that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples."*

Saul, of Tarsus, was a persecutor, and a blasphemer, and a murderer, hurried on by false zeal, but when he was on his way to Damascus, he received a new heart. And from that day and hour he was an humble, zealous, laborious, patient, and devout man. He spent his life in travelling and preaching in the midst of cruel enemies, who often scourged, beat, and imprisoned him. But his purpose never wavered, his zeal never abated, his patience and fortitude never gave way, but he went on praying for blessings on all, and sacrificing every thing that men count dear, for the promotion of the Gospel. Through a long life, he exhibited, in spirit, and conduct, a bright example of piety. His zeal for God's glory, his love to the Saviour, his affection for all true Christians, his benevolence to all men and tender concern for their salvation. His spirit of devotion, his indefatigable labours,

his patience, his self-denial, his trust in God, and contempt of worldly honours and possessions, do all most clearly manifest a heart renewed by the grace of God. All Christians, it is true, do not come up to the standard of Paul's experience and excellence; but all truly converted persons have something of the same spirit which was in this apostle; for true religion, though it differs in degree, is every where the same in kind.

Many persons, also, in modern times, give indubitable evidence of a new heart. Their whole views and tempers are changed. The tiger becomes a lamb. The proud, vindictive, covetous, and unclean, become humble, meek, contented, pure, benevolent, and devout. The change is often so remarkable, that all around observe it, and cannot but wonder at the alteration. Such monuments of the reality and power of the grace of God are, happily, to be met with in almost every place where the Gospel is faithfully preached.

It may be proper now to adduce some examples to show, how a renewed heart shows itself in the life.

A woman who had been a sinner, that is, a great sinner, having become penitent, (and repentance is nothing else than receiving a new heart,) felt such love to Christ that it constrained her to follow him into a house, where she knew that her presence would be detestable to the master of the house; but being filled with penitential grief for her past sins, she poured out a flood of tears on the Saviour's feet as they lay extended on the couch, and then kissed his feet and wiped them with her hair. Here was a new heart, for there was much love, and much humility and godly sorrow; and accordingly, her forgiveness was prompt and full. (See Luke vii.)

The Publican who prayed at the same time as the Pharisee in the temple, smote upon his breast and cried, *God be merciful to me a sinner*, had a new heart, for it was an humble, penitent, and believing heart; and accordingly he went down to his house justified.

The Syro-Phenician who would take no denial of her suit, but made a new plea of every objection, discovered evidence of a new heart, for no other heart professes such faith as this, or perseveres so importunately in prayer. And the nobleman who sent for Christ, but thought himself unworthy that he should come under his roof, had a new heart, for no one unrenewed is so bowed in humility.

On the other hand, Peter, although under the power of sudden temptation, wickedly denied his Lord with curses and oaths; yet showed that he had received a new heart, for when his Master looked upon him, and he was led to think of his conduct, his

heart was melted into contrition, and he went out and wept bitterly.

Mary, the sister of Lazarus, was so filled with desire of learning from Jesus, when he lodged at her house, that she omitted all attention to common business, that she might fully improve the precious privilege of hearing the instructions of her Lord: for while her more careful worldly sister was cumbered with much serving, she sat at Jesus' feet and heard his words. Mary had received a new heart, for she chose the better part which shall never be taken away from her.

Judas discovered that his heart was unrenewed because he was deliberately and habitually a thief, and for the love of money betrayed his Lord. And when convinced of his great sin, he did not repent with a godly sorrow, but with guilty despair, and went away and hanged himself. But Peter gave evidence that the root of the matter was in him, for even when he fell foully under the power of temptation, he almost instantly repented, and wept bitterly on account of his transgression.

Two thieves were crucified with Christ; one of them reviled him, but the other reproved his companion, and prayed to Jesus to remember him when he came into his kingdom. This was a prayer of faith. It proceeded from a renewed heart, and was graciously heard and fully answered. *This day*, said the dying Jesus, *shalt thou be with me in paradise.* Was ever scene like this? One dying man prays to another, who was also in the agonies of death, for a blessing, when he should receive his kingdom, and immediately, has a promise of an immediate entrance into paradise!

*J. G. Alexander*

ART. V.—1. *The Fundamental Principles of Evangelical Pietism, (viz: the Doctrines of Adam's Fall, Original Sin, and the Atonement) examined on Scriptural grounds, Compared with the Opinions of the Christian Church in the first three Centuries, and Judged in Reference to their utility, as parts of Christian Theology.* By Dr. C. G. Bretschneider, General Superintendent at Gotha, Leipzig, 1833. 8vo. pp. 420.\*

2. *The Advancement of Christianity to be the Religion of the World.* By Dr. C. F. Van Ammon, First Court Preacher to the King of Saxony. Leipzig, 1833. 8vo. pp. 281.†

PIETISM is a term of honourable reproach, analogous to Puritanism and Methodism in England. The origin of the term is a most interesting topic of religious history, into which we cannot, and need not enter now. What sort of a thing the German pietism of the present day is, may be gathered from the fact, that its "fundamental principles" are the doctrines of depravity and atonement. This we learn, not merely from the Pietists themselves, but from their adversaries. The title of the first book at the head of this article is a sufficient proof, that a war against pietism is a war against the dogmas of Adam's fall, original sin, and Christ's atoning sacrifice. Now it so happens that these are the subjects of dispute among ourselves. Not only are they, in their very essence, the terror and the loathing of all unbelievers; but alas, alas, the church itself is dividing in regard to them. The atmosphere of local controversy is a hazy one; and it is beneficial to exchange it for another, till the vision regains strength, and the lungs respire more freely. This end might be accomplished by an entire suspension of polemical discussion. But the subjects of dispute are too important and exciting to admit of intermission. While one combatant reposes, others carry on the fight, and an armistice on one side only, is a sure defeat. It may therefore be advisable to relieve the jaded faculties by a simple change of the localities and parties. The relative position of the German theologians, and their method of discussion, are so different from ours, that a visit to their camp

\* Die Grundlage des evangelischen Pietismus, oder die Lehren von Adams Fall, der Erbsuende, und dem Opfer Christi. Nach Gruenden der heiligen Schrift gepueft, mit den Ansichten der Christlichen, Kirche der drey ersten Jahrhunderten verglichen, und nach ihrem Gebrauche fuer die Christliche Theologie beurtheilt.

† Die Fortbildung des Christenthums zur Weltreligion. Eine Ansicht der hoeheren Dogmatik.

may serve a very useful purpose to our own belligerents. For this purpose no more opportune occasion could present itself than the appearance of the book, to which we have referred our readers. It appeared during the last year, and is therefore, not yet antiquated even in its own country. The sensation which it there produced was strong; so strong that it may well be looked upon as one of the most remarkable theological phenomena of the present day. And as to the author, his name is too well known, even among ourselves, to need a formal introduction. The biblical students of America have of late become familiar with the name of Bretschneider and some kindred spirits, in connexion with critical and doctrinal discussions. We have heard what he thinks of certain points in exegesis. Let us hear him on the fall of Adam and the sacrifice of Christ.

The book appears to have been designed particularly for the use of laymen, and with a special view to free them from the "anguish, the insanity, and the humiliating self-contempt" which *pietism* produces. This is weighty testimony in favour of the truth, and not the less so, for being borne by such a witness. No one, who understands the Bible, and believes it, need be told, that repentance and humility are tests of orthodox belief.

One circumstance which distinguishes this book, and many others like it, from the productions of our own illiterate infidels, is the form of biblical investigation which it every where assumes. It is not a metaphysical assault upon the truths of Christianity, nor a declamatory tissue of refuted common-places.

As the title page professes, it is an attempted refutation of the principles of pietism, on scriptural ground. The first passage expounded is the third chapter of Genesis, the object of which we are told, was to teach, that man ought to be contented with resembling God in wisdom and knowledge, and has no right to expect exemption from mortality. Here the author gives us to understand, that death, according to the Old Testament, is a natural and original arrangement, and that no such thing is there taught as a depravation of the will or understanding. We beg the reader to look at the points on which this infidel prelate soars above the prejudices of the olden time. It may be of use to know where it is that German rationalists have discovered the absurdity and falsehood of the Scriptures. We shall then be less surprised to find the same points assaulted, with various degrees of violence, by other theologians of a better reputation.

In the New Testament, says Dr. Bretschneider, there is nothing about the image of God being lost, nor is the fall of Adam mentioned except in an incidental manner. The meaning of

Romans v. 15. is that through the offence of Adam men became inhabitants of Hades. No one, however, can be "guilty of death" except by means of actual transgression. The subject is introduced by the Apostle, we are told, simply for the purpose of showing to the Jewish Christians on their own principles, that God could save the heathen without an observance of the law. We are no strangers to this act of transmuting the plain direct assertions of the Bible into illustrations and allusions.

After these specimens, the reader will not wonder to be told that faith, in the New Testament, never means reliance on the grace of God and the sacrifice of Christ, but a mere reception of Christianity, and a profession of Christian belief on receiving baptism.

The historical portion of the work undertakes to prove, from Barnabas, Hermas, both Clements, Ignatius, Justin, Theophilus, Irenæus, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, Lactantius, the fourth book of Esdras, the Testament of the twelve Patriarchs, the "Clementina," the Gospel of Nicodemus, the Sibylline writings, and the Apostolical constitutions, that in the first three centuries, the doctrine of original sin was unknown, and there was no settled belief respecting Adam's fall, the image of God, the future state of the soul, and other kindred topics; these dogmas forming no part of the popular religion, and being left to the discretion of the theologians.

The most important part of the book, however, is the discussion of the question, what use ought to be made of these doctrines in the theology of the present day. Here we have implied and asserted that favourite notion of our own empirics, with respect to the improvements of the science of theology. Let us see how the general superintendent of Gotha carries out the idea. Be it remembered that Dr. C. G. Bretschneider, though once supposed to be an almost Christian, or, only a half-way infidel, is at present one of the acknowledged heads of the party still called *rationalists* in Germany, and that very few belonging to that party do refuse to recognise him as a flattering sample and an authentic organ. It is true, as we may take occasion elsewhere to set forth, that rationalism strictly so called, is declining in the German schools and churches, and that other forms of error, more refined and subtle, are usurping its dominion. It is also true that some of the best men in Germany are strong in the persuasion, that our own country is the field on which the enemy whom they are driving out, is hereafter to appear. However weak and groundless this opinion may be thought, it well becomes us to look narrowly at the misshapen fiend, in his German incarnations, that we may not be startled when we see his hideous



lineaments half hidden by the disguise of an angel of light among ourselves.

What then is Bretschneider's opinion on the subject last referred to? He begins by manifestly exploding the old hermeneutic principle, that all the contents of the Bible have a reference, more or less direct, to matters of religion. On the ruins of this old wives' fable, he erects the principle of *rationalism*, founded on induction (!) It is that religion is a development of the human faculties in such a manner as to fit them for the knowledge of religious truths, which knowledge is to be obtained by observation of facts.\* To revealed religion therefore, appertains not the form in which the truth has been evolved, but only the pure product of the evolution. It is on this very principle, we are informed, that the Apostle Paul proceeds in all the passages which bear upon the doctrines now in question. Death is represented as a punishment for sin, in order to teach us that the progress to perfection must be internal as well as external, or it cannot be at all. Christ is represented as a victor over the evil spirits, in order to excite us to destroy the evil within us, and so gain eternal life. The death of Christ is represented as an expiatory sacrifice, in order to convince us, that the moral development of human character begins with imperfection, and includes a period subject, *as it were*, to demoniacal influence; but that God forgives the offences of this period, when the individual becomes a new man by spiritual baptism and wears the true image of God.

If the reader is struck with the obscurity and vagueness of these propositions, he must also be surprised at the use made of scriptural expressions, and the air of spirituality thrown over the infidel inanities. This is far more true of the author's own full statement than of our mere outlines, though even these exemplify the fact which we assert. It is not at random that we call attention to this little circumstance, but for the express purpose of reminding heedless readers, that the officious exhibition of scriptural formulas is never any proof of scriptural belief, for in Germany as well as in Judea and America "the devil can quote Scripture for his purpose."

The conclusion drawn from the considerations we have quoted is, that Christianity is not a scheme of expiation for original and actual sin, but a system of symbols designed to create and consummate in the minds of men the idea of immortality, and so to fit them for their lofty destination. The pietistical principles (of

\* The original term is *Weltanschauung*, contemplation of the world. But *world* seems to be used in the wide sense of universal history, civil, natural and religious.

depravity and atonement) are consequently unscriptural, and can find no place in a system of biblical theology.

The learned author of this book has, by his forced interpretations, and his disingenuous tampering with historical testimony, incurred the stinging censure of some contemporary critics, one of whom asks why he was not honest and bold enough to call the doctrines, which he fights against, "the fundamental principles of the Protestant church," instead of masking his design by the employment of a nickname on his title page.\*

We turn from Bretschneider to his worthy compeer Christopher von Ammon. This man, the infidel chaplain of a popish king, has been longer and more avowedly a thorough-paced rationalist than the superintendent of Gotha. Instead of assailing the Gospel therefore, under the name of *pietism*, he assumes at once an air of condescension, and on his very title page, appears as the protector and the patron of the Christian faith. He resembles his fellowcraft, however, in his attachment to the idea of developing, refining and improving Christianity. This is indeed the Shibboleth of modern new-lights. They occupy such different stations in the scale of degeneracy, that they cannot be identified by boundary lines. It is convenient therefore to be furnished with a countersign by which to challenge spies and interlopers in the camp of Israel.

These two books, though of the same stuff, are not of the same pattern. Bretschneider's book is critical, Ammon's is declamatory. The one is famous for his learning, the other for his eloquence. The superintendent deals out Greek and Hebrew with profusion, makes a show of exegesis, and puts the Fathers to the torture. The court-preacher weaves a splendid web of German rhetoric about Church and State, the march of intellect and the spirit of the age. They come together just at the point of strong contempt for old fashioned orthodoxy, with its absurd array of creeds, confessions, faith, and common sense. So may we see, in other lands, the spider's web of heresy spun out in different directions, or from different starting points, by insects most unlike in their appearance. But the circles are concentric and will constantly assume more unity of aspect, until swept from the walls and pillars of the Church by the besom of destruction.

Some of our countrymen appear to believe, in the simplicity of their hearts, that this theory of theological improvement is an invention of their own. We are sorry to disturb the dreams of happy ignorance; but sacred truth requires it. Many a poor

\* Rheinwald's Allgemeines Repertorium. November 21, 1833.

artisan, on finding that his fancied invention was already on record in the patent office, has felt the bitterness of Solomon's experience, "There is nothing new under the sun." A kindred pang would visit some of our brethren, old and young, if they could be listeners long enough to learn, that their complacent speculations on the march of mind in matters of theology, are but pitiful crudities, compared with the consistent, bold, and masterly development of the self-same principle, by such unshackled Germans as Christopher von Ammon. That benignant patron of the true religion, in his zeal for "the *advancement*\* of Christianity to be the religion of the world," undertakes to tell us how far this process of improvement can be carried, or in other words, how much of Christianity is absolute and incapable of change, and how much merely temporary and *perfectible*. Under the former description falls the belief in one God and his essential attributes, and also the *moral* divinity of the character of Christ as our model under the new dispensation. These, he distinctly states, are represented in the Scriptures as doctrines immutable and beyond the reach of all fluctuations in opinion. Dr. von Ammon is not therefore to be stigmatized as one who recognizes no fixed articles of faith. He has no less than two; quite a rich supply in these days of theological retrenchment.

But what is the *perfectible* or transitory element in the Christian system? It is, 1. Every thing in Christianity that arises from, or belongs to, its connexion with the Old Testament!

2. Every thing in Christianity that arises from, or belongs to, the personality or individuality of its earliest teachers, (Christ and his apostles)!!

3. The historical statements, the moral and theological doctrines, contained, or supposed to be contained, in the oldest record of our faith!!!

This is perfectibility with a witness! This is indeed the march of mind and an advance of theological science. We have not been able to present the triple classification of our author, wholly free from the peculiarities of his German terminology. It is too easy to perceive, however, what his classes are designed to comprehend. The first cut off, not only the Old Testament *en masse*, as a part of revelation, but every thing in the New, that can be possibly referred to a Jewish origin.

From the meager residuum which survives this operation, we are next to set aside whatever, to the eye of arbitrary criticism, betrays the impress of the individual through whom it was re-

\* *Fortbildung* means continued cultivation and improvement.

† "——das Sittichgoettliche in der Persoenlichkeit Jesu ——."

vealed. To one who is aware how little inspiration interferes with the display of individuality, and how strongly marked the Scriptures are with the distinctive traits of individual character, we need not say that these two canons are perfectly exhaustive. There is nothing left. And yet, as if on purpose to preclude evasion, or to try the strength of theological gravity, the old man adds a category which includes the other two, and sets exception at defiance. It might have been imagined that the *ethics* of the Scriptures would at least be spared. Even infidels and libertines have made set speeches in behalf of Christian morals. But that was in the days of old-school formality. Mind, mind is on the march, and the Upper Court Preacher to the king of Saxony is at the head of the column. In a line so long it is very possible that some may not be in sight of the commander. Yet are they not the less component parts of the mixed multitude, and we are sore afraid that some who look like independent chiefs, are only corporals and drum-majors in the army of the Ammonites.

We have given the essence of Ammon's system, and may spare ourselves the labour of reporting its ridiculous details. No American Christian, after reading the prodigious stuff which we have laid before him, will ask for a refutation. The absurdity and impudence of such a barefaced infidel's professing Christianity, is only matched by the atrocious wickedness of defiling the Lord's table with his unhallowed touch, and dishonouring the Gospel by pretending to proclaim it.

*J. S. Alexander*

ART. VI.—*The Life of the Rev. Rowland Hill, A. M.* By the Rev. Edwin Sidney, A. M. London, (printed.) New York, (reprinted,) 1834. 12mo.

A FEW years ago there were living, at the same time, five brothers and sisters of the family of Hill, each of whom had passed the boundary of three score years and ten. The last survivor was the Rev. Rowland Hill, whose life is now before us. Another little circumstance, which we may mention, is, that on one occasion, there sat down to table, and upon one side of it, the Rowland Hills of three generations. These were the Rev. Rowland Hill, his nephew Lord Hill, and his grand-nephew Sir Rowland, now member of parliament for Shropshire. This was in the house of Rowland's brother John, who had five sons in the battle of Waterloo, every one of whom returned in safety

to the bosom of his family. Many other facts might be adduced to show, that the family had other claims to distinction besides its antiquity and the longevity of its members.

Rowland Hill, was born at Hawkstone in Shropshire, August 23d, 1745. He was the sixth son of Sir Rowland Hill, Baronet. All that we know of his early childhood is, that he displayed that liveliness of disposition which in later life so strongly characterised him. It is worthy of remark, too, that he never learned to look upon this gaiety of spirit as a weakness or a fault, but to the end of life reverted with pleasure to the drolleries of his childhood.

It was at Eton school that he experienced a saving change, and there is something deeply interesting in his own declaration, that he never saw occasion to alter the simple views which he then adopted of essential Christian doctrines. The human instrument of his conversion was his eldest brother, Richard, whose religious history is worthy of remark. From the ninth to the twenty-fourth year of his age, he seems to have experienced, almost without remission, a distressing inward conflict. At Westminster, at Oxford, on the continent of Europe, in his father's house, he could find no peace. Neither religion nor the world, could give him comfort; and very often during this long trial, his distress arose to agony. The first relief which he obtained was from a private interview with Fletcher of Madeley, held at an inn in Shrewsbury, at the request of Hill, but without revealing his name. He now returned to Oxford, ostensibly to study law, but really to enjoy the retirement of a college. Here his dejection was exchanged for rapture, and his subsequent intercourse with Romaine in London, gave him no small comfort, though he still experienced sudden alternations, which arose, perhaps, in some degree, from constitutional causes.

It cannot be thought surprising, that one who had experienced such things as these, should feel a strong desire for the conversion of his friends. With untiring assiduity, he warned, exhorted, and advised his younger brothers then at Eton, urging them both to diligence in study and attention to their souls, and supplying them with such books as he thought would do them good. While one of the lads appeared to waver and to halt, the other furnished pleasing evidence of genuine conversion. This was Rowland, whose new principles were first displayed by the courageous zeal with which he preached the Gospel to his school-fellows. Contempt and censure were as nothing to him, and there is satisfactory proof that his juvenile efforts were blessed to the conversion of souls. Nay, so thorough-going was his Christian enterprise, that while he remained at Eton, he

formed a society among the boys for religious improvement, the effects of which were permanently felt, and gratefully remembered.

There were six livings, of considerable value, in the gift of the Hill family, but so restricted that they could only be conferred on fellows of St. John's College, Cambridge. As it was his father's wish that Rowland should enter the church, in which he fully acquiesced, he was sent to Cambridge, instead of Oxford, where most of his family were bred, in order to qualify him for presentation. He entered as a pensioner, but on a change of his designs, became a fellow-commoner, a class of students, who from their superior rank and situation, are not eligible to fellowships.

Young Rowland's outward trials were not left behind at Eton. They were just beginning. After stemming a torrent of reproach and ridicule from thoughtless school-boys, he was obliged to endure the frowns of both his parents. His tender affection for them might have made this insupportable, had not the presence of his devoted brother and a pious sister afforded him relief. His biographer adds, that a godly nobleman, highly respected by the family, helped to moderate the parental opposition. Such a nobleman should not have been left nameless.

That his outward comforts was not much enhanced by a removal to Cambridge, may be gathered from the affecting observation which he made himself; that "he was such a marked and hated person, merely on account of his religion, that nobody in the college ever gave him a cordial smile, except the old shoe-black at the gate, who had the love of Christ in his heart."

One of the earliest acquaintance of Rowland Hill at Cambridge, was Berridge, the well-known itinerant clergyman, who, though he had a stated parish, and a private fortune, preached for many years in fields and farm-yards, through the counties of Cambridge, Essex, Hartford, Bedford, and Huntingdon. He rented houses and barns, maintained lay-preachers, and travelled at his own expense. Under his influence, Rowland Hill began to manifest a zeal which, though sincere, was too erratic to escape official censure. In addition to his labours among the students, some of whom ascribed their conversion to his instrumentality, and among the sick and prisoners, he began to preach in Cambridge and the adjoining villages. This, as might have been expected, increased the censure of the college officers, and the opposition soon became so violent, that he consulted Whitefield. The answer to his letter was highly characteristic, urging him to continue in his labour of love, defying opposition, and rejoicing in reproach. "That is a poor building that a

little stinking breath of Satan's vassals can throw down. Go on, therefore, my dear man, go on." Is it strange that with such encouragement, from such a man as Whitefield, an ardent youth of twenty-one should have committed actual excesses? Is it even right to blame him with severity, when he certainly did wrong? We have no doubt that, whatever good may have resulted from his labours, the immediate effect of this irregular excitement on his own mind was injurious. His biographer gives extracts from his diary at this time, in relation, chiefly, to his public exercises. From the frequent allusions to the scanty audience, and his own dejection when preaching to a few, as well as his triumphant record of the mobbings he experienced, it is very clear, that an unconscious appetite for brilliant notoriety, was largely mingled with his unaffected ardour in the cause of Christ.

In the midst of these personal exertions at Cambridge, he maintained a correspondence with such as were like-minded in the sister University. There, the opposition was more violent than at Cambridge, and resulted in the expulsion of six young men on various grounds, but chiefly upon that of Methodism and the connexion with such men as Newton, Veinn, and Fletcher. This event gave rise to a public controversy, and affected Rowland Hill most sensibly. It did not however interrupt his course at Cambridge, where, in spite of bitter foes and cautious friends, he still pursued his bold career. It is a remarkable fact, that during this whole period his academical studies were by no means slighted, so that when he took his first degree in 1769, his name appeared upon the list of honours, an unusual thing, in those days, for a fellow-commoner. Nor was his religious zeal at all tinctured with moroseness. His constitutional vivacity continued unimpaired, and he was exceeded by no person, either at school or college, in athletic exercises, with the sole exception of his brother Robert. In riding, skating, and swimming he especially excelled. His favourite branch of study seems to have been mathematics in its application to natural philosophy, a preference which he entertained through life. Before we leave this period of history, we must mention, that in Cambridge, as in Eton, he had organized a society of students for religious improvement. Some of its members were his seniors in the University, and were settled in the ministry before he had completed his education. With these he maintained a constant correspondence, rendered more interesting by the diversity of sentiment among them, upon certain practical subjects, particularly that of *irregular* efforts to promote the cause of Christ. We were forcibly struck with one short extract from a

letter written by a young man, who was strongly in favour of the course pursued by Whitefield, Berridge, and on a smaller scale by Hill. The allusion is to a fellow student who on this point cherished opposite opinions; "you need not I think, mention any thing to Simpson, of what I design by the will of God to do in the ministry either now or afterwards. I dare not give him any pain, and though we think differently about the methods of advancing the kingdom of Christ, yet I am sure his eye is more single than mine, and what I very often take in myself to be a burning zeal, is nothing but constitution."

While Rowland Hill was an under-graduate, his eldest brother was pursuing his labour of love at home. When the young men already mentioned were expelled from Oxford, he assailed the act in a pamphlet called *Pietas Oxoniensis*, and when this was answered by the public orator of the University, he published a rejoinder called *Goliath Slain*. But the most interesting view of his character is that presented by his efforts for the spiritual good of his dependents and poor neighbours. Though the heir of an ancient and honourable family, he became a village preacher and a visiter of prisons. His affectionate interest in those whom Providence had placed far below him in society, is beautifully evinced by the following entry in a little memorandum book. "February 6, 1766, this day, being Thursday, about a quarter past twelve at noon, my dear humble faithful servant, Giles Archer, sweetly fell asleep in Jesus. His disorder was a fever, which lasted exactly three weeks. The Lord enable me to follow him as he followed Christ." This noble Christian gentleman with all his brother's zeal, appears to have had little of his extravagance, a difference explained by the fact already mentioned, that he attained to peace of mind through conflicts of intense severity and astonishing duration, while Rowland had experienced scarcely any trials but those which were external. Opposition *ab extra* often hardens while it fortifies, or at least confirms the erratic singularities which called it forth. The sevenfold furnace of internal trial, not only purifies, but softens and subdues. The benevolent exertions of a man like Richard Hill could not fail to make a powerful impression on the laity around him. Well might Whitefield say, "a prison-preaching, field-preaching Esq. strikes more than all the black gowns and lawn sleeves in the world." In a short time, however, he relinquished this particular form of Christian effort, and leaving the pulpit to its regular incumbents, confined himself to labours more consistent with his own situation and the order of the church.

On leaving the University, Rowland Hill was placed in a predicament extremely mortifying, but which might have been



foreseen. Unwilling to forsake the church of England, yet unwilling to promise strict obedience to her rules, he was met upon the threshold of the ministry by a severe repulse. No less than six bishops successively refused to give him ordination. His impatience to take order was increased by a singular presentiment that his life would be a short one!

Whitefield being now dead, Hill depended for advice upon his old friend Berridge, who, with all his piety, contributed but little to correct the young man's characteristic errors. As a sample of his judgment, we may mention that the conduct of Sir Richard Hill, in ceasing to preach publicly, incurred his sore displeasure. Nevertheless, both he and Rowland Hill were very strong in their attachment to the liturgy and articles. In the case of the latter, this was clearly proved by his adhesion to the church in spite of all the barriers which her prelates reared between him and the ministry. After living in retirement at his father's house for some time, he began again to preach, in consequence of which, popular insult was soon added to ecclesiastical censure and parental disapprobation. Berridge the while encouraged him to continue 'a spiritual comet,' and assured him that the darkest moment in the whole *nucthemeron* was just before the break of day. In the course of his preaching expeditions, he visited a multitude of places, and laboured, apparently, with such success, that Mr. Wesley took occasion to express his approbation in emphatic terms. During these exertions he derived no benefit from the rank and affluence of his family. In order, both to punish and prevent his eccentricities, Sir Rowland Hill allowed him but a scanty pittance. His journeys were made upon a little pony presented by a clergyman, and he depended for subsistence upon Christian hospitality.

In 1771, Mr. Hill preached in Somersetshire, Gloucestershire, and Wiltshire, cheered and directed by occasional letters from Mr. Berridge, in one of which we find these characteristic sentences: "God sends you out to thrash the mountains, and a glorious thrashing it is." "If you meet with success, as I trust you will, expect clamour and threats from the world, and a little venom now and then from the children. These bitter herbs make good sauce for a young recruiting serjeant, whose heart would be lifted up with pride, if it was not kept down by these pressures." The extracts from Hill's diary, at this period, show that he met with that variety of treatment in his public ministrations, which Wesley and Whitefield had experienced before him. Sometimes he was pelted with stones and rotten eggs, sometimes silenced by the din of pans and shovels, horns and bells. In other cases he was heard with breathless interest and deep

respect; and on one occasion three hundred people came from a neighbouring town and took him home to preach. In the midst of these vicissitudes, we find him saying: "I am more than ever convinced that itinerant preaching does a world of good, and that God blesses it continually." "I am fully satisfied as to field-preaching. I know the Lord puts honour upon it."

There can be no doubt, indeed, that he achieved a great deal for the cause of Christ. An old lady at Wotton, in Gloucestershire, used to relate, that she was sitting one day at her tea, when a relation came in saying, "Ann, the baronet's son who goes about preaching is under the market-house." "Are you sure it is the baronet's son?" "Yes; that I am, for I saw his brother, Mr. Richard Hill, not long ago, and he is so like him, I am sure he is of the same family." She went, and was awakened. On this occasion, a man who stood by her was about to throw a stone at Mr. Hill, when another laid hold of him, and said in the Gloucestershire dialect, "If thee dost touch him, I'll knock thy head off." The man dropped the stone, and the people became quiet. These little anecdotes are vivid pictures, and as such, worth volumes of mere prosing. We must copy another which relates to Richard Hill, whose determination to abandon preaching we have already mentioned. His father, charmed with this return to reason, as he thought it, sent him to Bristol to bring Rowland home. When he got there, Rowland was at Kingswood, preaching to the colliers. Richard found him in the midst of a discourse. The tears flowing down the black faces of the colliers, touched his heart. Rowland saw his emotion, and though he guessed his errand, closed the service by announcing, "My brother, Richard Hill, Esq. will preach here at this time to-morrow." The stroke succeeded. Richard preached, and instead of taking Rowland home, remained to help him in his labours.

The winter was spent by Mr. Hill at home, where he was received more kindly than he had expected. In the spring of 1772, he returned to Bristol, where he had preached before, and there renewed his labours. In the summer he came forth at London, as in some sort the successor to Whitefield, and preached to vast assemblies in the Tabernacle, and Tottenham Court Chapel. The effect of his discourses is described as very great, though in multitudes of cases it was not revealed for years. He had afterwards the rich reward of being told of many, who ascribed, upon their death-bed, their conversion to his preaching. While he was in London, he was represented in the west by captain Joss, a pious seaman, who reported progress, ever and anon, with a profusion of marine metaphor. Another assistant

in the same field was a grazier and butcher by the name of Hogg.

In the summer of 1772 Mr. Hill proceeded to his second degree in the arts, after which he preached in London, Kent, and Surry, retiring, as the winter approached, to his father's seat in Shropshire. At the close of his second chapter, Mr. Sidney gives an extract from a letter, in relation to the doctrines preached by Mr. Hill, who there complains of Wesley's gross injustice in branding Calvinists as Antinomians, and appeals to the constancy with which they denounced iniquity and preached the necessity of personal and universal holiness. "I have often known it to be a fact, that when some of those good people connected with him (Mr. W.) have ventured to break through his command, to hear what dreadful doctrines we *Antinomians* have to advance, they have been as much astonished at what they have heard in favour of holiness, as if they had been sitting on enchanted ground."

Early in the year 1773, Mr. Hill opened a negociation, through his brother-in-law Mr. Tudway, with the Bishop of Bath and Wells. The necessity of regular ordination, as a means of greater usefulness, was so apparent, that he prevailed upon himself to exercise great caution for the purpose of securing it. It is curious to observe the effect of these restraints upon a man of such erratic temper and habits. In a letter to a friend, he gave particular directions, with respect to the inducements and considerations to be laid before the bishop, and in order to avoid giving 'immediate disgust,' consented to withdraw from public labours for a time. It would be unjust, however, not to add, that he refused to pledge himself, in one way or another, with respect to proceedings after ordination. For some weeks he confined himself to an inactive state at home, but near the end of March set out upon a journey. We are amused with the result. His diary informs us, that on the evening of the first day, he preached "to a small congregation, notice not having been given, in the Baptist meeting-house" at Coventry. Two days afterwards, March 26, he "hastened to Northampton and preached in the late Dr. Doddridge's meeting-house, to a large assembly;" "in the evening to a still larger congregation;" the next morning "in the same place, excessively crowded." On the 28th at Olney, where "a very large congregation from every quarter attended," and as no meeting-house would hold them, he preached out of doors. At Woburn he preached with much appearance of success; but was admonished, by a letter, of his great imprudence in sacrificing future usefulness to immediate action. In his answer he exclaims with some bitterness of spirit, "O that I were

at liberty to labour for my God !” And even when to his surprise and pleasure he was informed, that his overtures had been well received by Bishop Wills, it was with great reluctance that he took the necessary step of withdrawing for a time from public view. This reluctance indeed could not be expressed more strongly than in his private record of his actual retreat. “There being,” says his journal, “a considerable prospect of my ordination, retired into Shropshire, and preached a few sermons at Hardwick, Marchamley, &c.” Well may his biographer say, that preaching was his element; and well might Mrs. Hill in latter life, express her dread of his becoming unable to preach, as the greatest misfortune that could befall him. Through the mercy of God he did preach to the last.

On the twenty-third of May, 1773, he was married in London to the sister of his brother-in-law Mr. Tudway, and on the sixth of June he was ordained deacon by the bishop of Bath and Wells, “without any promise or condition whatever,” and as he says himself “through the kind and unexpected interposition of Providence.” The aged prelate (Dr. Wills) had already shown a favourable feeling towards the Methodists in his proceedings with respect to Mr. Rouquet, who was one of them, and in whose church at Bristol, Mr. Hill preached his first *regular* sermon, June 8, 1773.

We have already said, that Mr. Hill never learned to look upon his jocose humour as a blemish in his social character. But his biographer informs us, he frequently lamented his propensity to comic turns and ludicrous expressions in the pulpit. No sooner did he yield to this besetting sin, than he appeared to sorrow over it, and passed by an abrupt transition to unusual solemnity and pathos. We may take this opportunity to say, that many of the pulpit jokes on record, as the sayings of Rowland Hill, are, in all probability, supposititious. Mr. Sidney most emphatically states, that the current stories with respect to his observations from the pulpit about Mrs. Hill, are all without foundation. When the good old man was told of them, instead of laughing heartily, as he did at other tales, he exclaimed with indignation, “It is an abominable untruth, derogatory to my character as a Christian and a gentleman. They would make me out a bear.” And yet alas! many who know nothing of his zeal, his self-denial, and his holiness of life, are quite familiar with his fictitious speech about the “chest of drawers.” Is not this a striking comment on the danger of acquiring an extensive reputation for facetiousness, however neutralized by nobler elements of character? Many coarse minds let the qualifying circumstances slip

and hold the questionable fast, to serve as models and excuses for themselves.

Mr. Hill was ordained to serve the parish of Kingston in Somersetshire, with an annual stipend of forty pounds. On taking possession of it he began to preach almost daily in the surrounding villages. He was shortly after arrested by a violent bilious complaint, but as soon as he recovered fell to work again. He was pelted, lampooned, threatened, burnt in effigy; but his spirits never flagged. Old Berridge was in ecstasies. "Dear Sir—I mean my dear Rowly," thus he writes, "your letter was long in coming, but it brought good tidings." "I was afraid lest orders would cure you of rambling, but my fears were groundless and all is well." "Study not to be a fine preacher. Jerichos are blown down with ram's horns." "Avoid all controversy in preaching, talking, or writing. Preach nothing down but the devil, and nothing up but Jesus Christ."

It appears from Mr. Hill's own statement, that he had received a promise of priest's orders from the Bishop of Carlisle, provided some one else would give him the first degree. This is certainly odd policy in a successor of the apostles, but the promise, strange as it was, was never kept. Mr. Hill presented himself to his lordship of Carlisle with a letter dismissory from him of Bath and Wells; but the first named dignitary gave him to understand, that his Archbishop had forbidden him to redeem his pledge. Here ended his hopes of 'full orders,' and here began his new career of 'public labours.'

The close of the year 1773 was spent by Mr. Hill in active labour about London. He was at this time the most popular preacher in the metropolis, and was therefore often called upon for charity sermons, both by churchmen and dissenters. The natural simplicity and ardour of his preaching was as charming in public, as his affectionate hilarity in private life. Mr. Sidney gives the testimony of two distinguished men to the power of his discourses. The one was Sheridan, who used to say, "I go to hear Rowland Hill, because his ideas come red-hot from the heart." The other was Dean Milner, who said to him after one of his sermons, "Mr. Hill, Mr. Hill, I felt to-day. It is this slap-dash preaching, say what they will, that does all the good." In the same connexion Mr. Sidney, who is not very methodical in his remarks, takes occasion to observe, that Mr. Hill was always exquisitely pleased on being asked to preach in a church,\* and proportionally mortified when not allowed to do so. On the

\* Some of our readers may forget that in England, the very name church is monopolised by the established sect.

same principle he indignantly disclaimed the title of dissenter. "The church turned me off, not I her. I confess I like a little more liberty than she allows, and thank God, I can ask great Dr. Chalmers, and great Dr. Morrison and others, when they come to London, to preach in Surry Chapel. I suppose they would not let St. Paul, if he was to come upon earth now, preach in his own cathedral."

As the personal habits of such men are worth recording, we add from this same chapter, that even after having preached four times, with great exertion of voice, he would entertain his friends with lively conversation until late at night, and then retire, saying, "It is time for Methodist preachers to be in bed, I am sure," but only to renew his labours at the dawn of day.

After spending several months in London, Mr. Hill commenced a preaching tour in Gloucestershire and Wales. A favourite practice with him was to preach at fairs and shows, and other gatherings of the common people. His favourite text on these occasions was, 'Come out from among them.' In Wales he preached regularly twice a day, and often four times. He was followed from place to place by thousands, and was struck with the fact, that the change of the weather had no influence at all upon his Welsh conventicles. He used to say in England, "If you loved the Gospel as the Welsh do, you would not mind a shower." He was not so well pleased, however, with the jumpers whom he here encountered, and on one occasion, when a number of his hearers were reduced to this extremity, he cried out, "Let us have no more of this mummery and nonsense!" His biographer adds, that he could never tolerate the least approach to fanaticism.

In 1775 Rowland and Richard Hill took part in the controversy between Toplady and Hervey on the one side, and the Wesleys on the other. It has often been said that the asperity was all upon the Calvinistic side,\* a statement which Mr. Sidney contradicts, not denying that there was unnecessary acrimony, but alleging that it was common to both parties.

During this year Hill preached in Kent and Gloucestershire, his head quarters being at Wotton, where he had built a house and a chapel, called the Tabernacle, in a delightful situation. The latter part of the year he divided between London and Bristol. In the former city he organized a *Societas Evangelica*, to aid settled ministers in itinerating near their homes.

At this, as well as other periods of his life, Mr. Hill was con-

\* "Never," says Southey, "were any writings more thoroughly saturated with the essential acid of Calvinism than those of the predestinarian champions."—*Life of Wesley*.

stantly rejoiced by attestations to his ministerial usefulness. Remarkable statements of this kind were often presented to him in writing, before public service, and read to the congregations. On one of these occasions a characteristic incident occurred. A paper was laid upon the desk just before the prayers commenced. He took it and began—"The prayers of the congregation are requested for—umph—for—umph—well, I suppose I must finish what I have begun—for the Reverend Rowland Hill, that he will not go riding about in his carriage on a Sunday. If the writer of this piece of folly and impertinence is in the congregation, and will go into the vestry after service, and let me put a saddle on his back, I will ride him home instead of going in my carriage."

In 1776, Mr. Hill became acquainted with Sir Harry Trelawney, then a very young man, just dismissed from Oxford, on account of irregularities similar to those committed by himself at Cambridge. It is melancholy, though not surprising, to find the clergyman of thirty encouraging this novice in a foolish imitation of himself. Here again immediate good may have resulted; but the means were more than questionable.

The readers of biographies are so accustomed to see copious extracts from religious diaries, that they are apt to be surprised when this ingredient is wanting. Up to the period which we have mentioned, Mr. Hill recorded merely the texts from which he preached, with a few words of occasional remark. In 1777 even this was discontinued, and supplied by a reference to the texts in his pocket Bible. In this year he was again involved in controversy with Wesley, during which he was obliged to repel the charge of disloyalty, founded on his preaching in favour of the American colonies.

The death of Toplady in 1778 was deeply felt by Hill. Mr. Sidney gives a letter from Mr. Matthews, father of the celebrated actor, containing an account of Toplady's last hours, while he was in attendance. This sufficiently refutes the rumours current at the time, which cast a shade over Toplady's departure, and which were attributed by some to Wesley. Richard Hill made two attempts, by letter, to obtain a disavowal from Wesley but without effect and a personal application by two of Toplady's friends was equally unsuccessful.

Rowland Hill preached often in St. George's Fields. During the riots in 1780 he addressed assemblies of near twenty thousand people. Several men of wealth who had been converted through his preaching, and were anxious to save others, formed the plan of erecting a chapel in some neglected and depraved quarter of London, of which Hill should be the minister, with liberty to

travel in the summer, and to invite men of all denominations to the pulpit. The site selected was St. George's Fields, and the name of the building, Surry chapel.

On laying the corner stone of Surry Chapel, in June, 1782, Mr. Hill preached a sermon, a pretended copy of which was given to the world soon after. This forgery annoyed him not a little, and induced him to adopt the precautionary measure of publishing, himself, the sermon which he preached at the opening of the Chapel in the summer of 1783.

The control of the Chapel was vested in trustees, among whom were Mr. Hill and his eldest brother, now Sir Richard Hill. The direction of the pulpit was committed to the Minister alone, "so long as he should preach agreeably to the doctrinal standards of the church of England and not give the use of the pulpit to any one who was known to preach otherwise." The liturgy was strictly adhered to in the public services, and the Chapel became famous for its music, which attracted many hearers. Benevolent institutions soon sprang up in connexion with the Chapel, among which were thirteen Sunday schools, containing above three thousand children.\* Prayer meetings were zealously encouraged, but kept entirely subject to the minister's control. At this time he described himself as "Rector of Surry Chapel, Vicar of Wotton-underedge, and Curate of all the fields and commons throughout England and Wales." He continued his itinerant labours from time to time, and frequently exchanged with clergymen of congenial sentiments.

Soon after Surry Chapel was erected, Mr. Simeon commenced his public services in Cambridge, an event which forms an era in the religious history of the University. Mr. Hill entertained a profound respect for Mr. Simeon, though the latter was well known to disapprove of all irregularity, and by his example condemned the juvenile exercises of Mr. Hill himself.

In 1795 Mr. Hill took an active part in the formation of the London Missionary Society, to which he was always devotedly attached. In 1796 he visited Ireland, and in 1798 Scotland. At Edinburgh he preached in the circus, till it was no longer able to contain the audience, when he exchanged it for a platform on the Calton hill. After paying a visit to the West of Scotland, he returned to Edinburgh, where his congregation soon arose to twenty thousand, and many persons were supposed to be converted. The General Assembly published a pastoral letter, warning the people against extravagance and censuring itinerants.

\* Mr. Sidney states that Mr. Hill has the honour of being the first to introduce Sunday schools into London.



This led to a controversy between the Assembly and Rowland Hill, whose whole attention was absorbed by the affair. On his second visit to Scotland, this was the theme of his discourses, in consequence of which, not a soul is known to have been converted by his preaching. The charge against him was that he 'rode upon the backs of order and decorum,' to which he replied that he should like to ride such order and decorum to death. He afterwards named two of his horses *Order* and *Decorum*, by way of perpetuating the jest. He lived however to regret the course which he pursued in Scotland. In 1799 Mr. Hill assisted in the formation of the Religious Tract Society. He was the chairman of its first committee, and always took a lively interest in its affairs. About the year 1800 he conceived the plan of his "Village Dialogues," a work which has passed through thirty editions and been translated into several languages. Some of his friends were of opinion that it contained too sweeping an attack upon the clergy, and others were doubtful as to the copious admixture of the humorous with its serious contents. The book however has undoubtedly received the seal of rich success.\* His "Sale of Curates," was published in opposition to the wishes of his most judicious friends and the urgent entreaties even of dissenters. The consequence was, that he was forthwith excluded from the pulpits of the establishment to which he had been admitted, and expressed a wish himself that this ill-judged publication could be recalled.

In the British and Foreign Bible Society from first to last, Mr. Hill felt the deepest interest. Its founders were his personal friends, and Lord Teignmouth was a connexion of his family. He watched its progress with delight, and was especially rejoiced at its triumphant introduction into the Universities. The contrast was indeed remarkable between the prevailing sentiments in Cambridge when he resided there, and those which were expressed by some of the highest academical dignitaries forty years later.

One of Mr. Hill's personal friends, was Dr. Jenner, and one of his favourite employments, that of vaccinating the children of the poor. In the course of a few years, he had bestowed this favour on above ten thousand.

In 1808, he lost his beloved brother Richard, who left him a handsome addition to his income, which enabled him to multiply his charities. In the same year he laid the foundation of a

\* Most of the dialogues were written on separate slips of paper, after Mrs. Hill had retired for the night; and Mr. Hill said that after writing some of the pathetic passages, when he read them over he "used to burst out a crying."

chapel in Cheltenham, on the plan of his own in London. Here he often preached in the winter of 1810-11.

Mr. Hill took an active part in a contested election. This drew upon him much animadversion, and he resolved to repeat the experiment no more. In the autumn of 1811, two of his ribs were broken by a fall from his horse, in consequence of which he was confined for weeks to bed, and while convalescent, was attacked with an inflammation in his eye, which disabled him to preach for several months. This affliction seems to have been sanctified to his spiritual benefit. On escaping from confinement he visited Cheltenham for his health, and though his eye was still affected, preached almost incessantly.

The laurels won by his gallant nephews in the peninsular war, were a source of much delight to Rowland. In the public manifestations of respect to Lord Hill on his return to England, the old man took the liveliest interest. He attended at Guildhall when a sword was presented to his Lordship, by the city corporation. At the close of the ceremony, when Rowland Hill came out, the populace cried out, "Here comes the good old uncle!" and followed him with huzzas, as he departed. He could not help contrasting these expressions of respect, with the contempt and obloquy which he had once experienced. Nor was he less affected by the change in his private relations. Walking in the family grounds at Hawkstone, then the seat of his brother Sir John Hill, he said to a friend: "you see now I am how received here. In my youth I have often paced this spot bitterly weeping, while, by most of the inhabitants of yonder house, I was regarded as a disgrace to my family. But," he added, the tears trickling down his aged cheeks, "it was for my God." As if to check any undue tendency to worldly gratifications, which might have resulted from the honour of his kindred, Mr. Hill was visited soon after these events by a severe disease, which much alarmed his friends. By medical assistance of the highest order, he was through God's blessing, soon restored, to the great joy of his people. The account which Mr. Sidney gives of his first appearance after this confinement, is very affecting. Multitudes who met him, wished him joy of his recovery, and tradesmen left their shops to bid him welcome.

In 1816, Mr. Hill was much perplexed and agitated by an attempt to assess his chapel to the parish rates, an affair which, interesting as it was to him, is nothing to our readers. About the same time, he obtained a valuable assistant, in the person of Theophilus Jones, a Welshman, by trade a cabinet-maker, but endowed with unusual preaching gifts. Mr. Hill himself, though more than seventy years old, preached always, at least four

times in the week, while in London, and five at Wotton, besides other public services. Nay, he actually performed at this advanced age, a missionary tour in Wales, and preached twenty-one sermons in a single week. Such was the force of habit, and such his attachment to his office, that he was always disconcerted on coming at a place where he could not have the opportunity of preaching. To friendly invitations, he would frequently reply, "I will come, if you can find me a place to preach in."

Mr. Hill was an active member of the Village Itinerancy Society, founded in 1796, and designed to furnish religious instruction to destitute or neglected districts. Since 1803, there has been a theological school in connexion with it. Mr. Sidney takes pains to show, that Mr. Hill was much opposed to all encroachment on the sphere of any faithful parish minister. We can hardly suppose, however, that his explanations would be very satisfactory to a rigid churchman, inasmuch as the Society aforesaid assumed to itself the power of deciding who are faithful ministers.

Another object of Christian benevolence, in which Mr. Hill felt a lively interest, was the moral improvement of Seamen. He was among the first promoters of a floating place of worship, and took much delight in preaching to the sailors, among whom he was a favourite.

In 1819, just before his usual time of quitting London for the country, he fell through a trap-door in Surry chapel, and injured his leg severely. Considering his age, it must be regarded as a signal providence, that, in the beginning of the following year he was quite recovered. This misfortune, like the one already mentioned, appears to have exerted a happy religious influence upon him.

As we pursue the history of Rowland Hill, our astonishment at his activity increases. He was already in the seventy-eighth year of his age, when he undertook a journey of more than four hundred miles for the London Missionary Society, during which he preached every day, with much success. Nothing can evince more clearly the original strength of his constitution, than the fact, that in 1822, he again broke one of his ribs, without permanent injury, or a long suspension of his labours. Nay, his vigour seems to have increased as he grew older, for in 1823, his seventy-ninth year, he performed another long and arduous missionary tour; and in the following spring revisited Scotland, preaching daily to overflowing congregations. At Liverpool, where he preached for Dr. Raffles, on his way home, a man said, "It is no use trying to get in, they run over like

peas from a bushel." Though sometimes exhausted during these exertions, he reached home improved in health both of body and soul.

In 1824, Mr. Hill was tried by the sufferings of his wife, who aged as she was, submitted to a painful and dangerous operation. The same kind providence which had brought him through so many perilous casualties, restored his partner to health and temporary comfort with astonishing rapidity. In 1825, Mr. Hill performed his usual routine of services in London, and paid a visit to the West of England, where an incident occurred, which evinced that his spirit was yet unimpaired. After a sermon, in which he had assaulted the Socinians, one of that persuasion was heard to say, "Poor old gentleman! it is a pity he does not leave off." This came to his ear, and he related it on another public occasion, at the close of a very spirited address, abruptly adding, "The poor old gentleman will never leave off, till the power to refute error leaves off him."

In the spring of 1826, Mr. Hill performed a preaching tour in Kent, and in the autumn of the same year did the like in Devonshire. In January, 1827, Mrs. Hill wrote respecting him,—“He is still able to preach twice on a Sunday, though he says in the evening of the day, ‘I am very tired.’ But he is thought the wonder of the age, to do what he does, at eighty-two.” His voice was not yet at all impaired, and though he was troubled with a cough, it seemed rather to annoy than injure him. It is worthy of notice, that his sermons were now free from all admixture of the ludicrous, and that rambling declamation was exchanged for logical method, yet without a diminution of vivacity and freedom. It is probable, indeed, that these were his best days as a preacher, in point of permanent effect. In the year 1827, a young lady of Gloucestershire, Miss Sheppard, offered to execute a likeness of Mr. Hill, in order to raise money for the erection of an infant school. The plan was carried through with great success. The portrait found such sale, that before the end of the year, she laid the foundation stone of a spacious room at Uley, where instruction is given daily to a hundred and sixty infants, and fifty larger girls, and on the Sabbath to three hundred scholars.

During this year, Mr. Hill pursued a course of astonishing activity. He visited Brighton, Kent, and Sussex, and later in the year went on a preaching excursion into Wales! It is pleasing to learn that while his active habits were adhered to, he visibly increased in spirituality of mind, looking forward with solemn cheerfulness to the time of his departure.

Outward circumstances were extremely favourable to the

comfort and usefulness of Rowland Hill, in his declining years. From temporal cares he was entirely exempt, and his happiness was much enhanced by the affectionate attentions of Lord Hill, now resident in London, as commander of the forces. The places of the friends whom he had followed to the grave, were filled by a new generation of devoted Christians. His regard to one of these, (Mr. Broadley Wilson) he expressed by wishing that he might be long kept out of heaven, he was so much wanted on earth.

We must not forget to add, that his buoyancy of spirits still continued unimpaired, and still contributed to the enjoyment of the public. His appearance at a meeting was greeted with delight, crowds pressing forward to hand him from his carriage, and assist him to the platform. On these occasions, Mr. Sidney tells us, all seemed equally delighted, save the coachman, now and then, when he was pointed out and stared at, as the celebrated highwayman whom Rowland Hill was said to have taken into his service. When told of this, his master used to laugh and say, "What swallows people must have, to believe such stories."

The wild speculations about prophecy, which at this time became rife, met with little favour at the hands of Rowland Hill. Those who were afflicted with this monomania, he beheld with great compassion, wondering especially, that some of them who were not without understanding, "should prefer to have such wind-mills whisking about their heads." At a later date he wrote to Mr. Sidney: "What a number have got addle-headed about the personal reign of Christ." "—— may keep his mag-gots, and fine flourishing style to himself. I like Paul's plain style best." "May you and I never be the retailers of such whipt-syllabub divinity." "Good brown-bread preaching is the best after all."

In 1828, we find this wonderful old man still active. Besides preaching at Bristol and Cheltenham with augmented, rather than diminished vigour, he occupied the pulpit of his friend Mr. Jay, of Bath, who had for many years supplied his place in Surry chapel during a part of his absence from London. There is something very interesting in the close attachment of two so unlike in mind and habit. Mr. Hill used to characterize the style of preaching in which Jay excels, by saying, that he blew the silver trumpet.

On his eighty-fifth birth-day he preached at Wotton from the text, *Death is swallowed up in victory*. He was under a strong impression that his years were numbered; and from Mr. Sidney's statement, this interesting exercise must have been full of

solemn grandeur. Some of his old parishioners were touched with grief at their anticipated loss, and one said, with the simple pathos which belongs to humble life, "I wish we could *put him back* about forty years." During a journey which he made this year in Gloucestershire, he experienced the heavenly joy of hearing from the lips of many, that his own ministrations in years long past had been the means of their conversion unto God. This was indeed a solace for declining age.

The only indication of decline yet visible, was increasing dimness of sight, in consequence of which he was obliged to employ an amanuensis. Notwithstanding this infirmity, his labours were continued with relentless ardour. In the spring of 1830, with a bad cold upon him, he set out for Kent, and after preaching for a fortnight, returned in better health than when he went. Soon after, he attended the anniversary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, where, as soon as he appeared, he was unanimously greeted with enthusiastic plaudits.

In no situation does this venerable minister appear to more advantage, than in the deep affliction into which he was brought down by the death of his wife. A union of nearly sixty years was not to be dissolved without a pang; nor is it possible to view without sympathy a childless man left alone by the companion of his life, at such an age. Mrs. Hill was, in all things, except piety, unlike her husband. Strangers thought her too reserved; but that reserve was the index to a calmness of temper and a sobriety of judgment, which for more than half a century held Rowland Hill's erratic mind and hasty spirit in salutary check. It was agreed between them, before marriage, that she should never interfere with the discharge of what he thought his duty. This promise she religiously performed. But her superior judgment taught her how to control and modify his very views of duty, so that a timely operation on his plans beforehand, superseded the necessity of vexatious interference at the point of execution. There can be no doubt, we think, that much of Rowland Hill's real usefulness may be ascribed, so far as human agency assisted, to the wisdom of his wife.

To relieve his mind from the pressure of sad recollections, he withdrew from London to Leamington, in Warwickshire, where a chapel was established on the Surry plan. He met with unexpected opposition in relation to the use of the Liturgy, from obstinate dissenters. Mr. Sidney expresses his surprise that forms should be objected to *in toto*, when the adoption of the words of extemporaneous prayer by those who hear it, makes that prayer a real form. There is some truth in this, and we would venture to suggest the quere, whether too much argument

is not expended against forms *qua tales*, when the true ground of objection is the scantiness and sameness of the forms. Zealous as we are for Presbyterian order, we prefer the English liturgy to many forms of prayer in use among ourselves, especially to such as are disfigured by low slang and gross offences against purity of language. But how strange the notion, that the Book of Common Prayer exhausts the petitions which are proper and desirable in public worship. Why not have a form of preaching—not a book of Homilies—but a single sermon, with a few moveable passages to be inserted or omitted on particular occasions? Because preaching has relation to a multitude of topics, says the Episcopalian. So has prayer, say we.

Mr. Hill felt much solicitude in the last years of his life respecting a successor in Surry chapel. He was very desirous to procure a clergyman attached, like himself, to the church of England, but, like him, desirous of more liberty than the church would grant. The state of things, however, was entirely changed, since he began his course. The established church, instead of being one lifeless mass, had now a little host of true evangelists, men who perhaps have never been surpassed in purity and fervour. But these men had added patience to their faith, and sober judgment to their patience. They believed that so long as they bore office in the church of England, they were subject to its rules. They could not therefore enter into Mr. Hill's place, unless the chapel were subjected to canonical authority. This Mr. Hill declined, nor could he have done otherwise, for the house had been erected, not with episcopal money, but with sums contributed by Christians of almost every name, and the freedom objected to had been a prime condition in soliciting their aid.

Rowland Hill protested against the lamentable schism in the British and Foreign Bible Society, which took place in 1831, but lived to see it healed. In the same year he attended the London Missionary Society for the last time. Though the loneliness of his situation frequently depressed him, he was quite as frequently in a lively humour, delighting and delighted with his characteristic pleasantry. One subject of his jests, as well as his lamentations, was the pretended gift of tongues.

As he was getting into his carriage after one of the anniversaries, he struck his leg against the step. This at first merely smarted a little, but resulted in a violent inflammation, which confined him to the house. Before he was recovered he went into Warwickshire, where frequent preaching and anxiety about his chapel at Leamington, brought back the inflammation. Still, he continued to preach, until disabled and subjected to considerable suffering. As soon as it was possible, he resumed his

labours and again relapsed. Yet strange to tell, he returned to London in the winter, wholly free from any symptoms of his recent illness. He began, however, to exhibit premonitions of decay, though his mind retained its vigour unimpaired.

On the 7th of May, 1832, Mr. Hill left London and repaired to Wotton, where, though weaker than at any former time, he preached repeatedly and always with apparent benefit. To Mr. Sidney, who was with him on a visit he said, "I wish your church-rules would let you preach for me this evening." "Sir," said he, "I am contented to obey them as they are." "Ah," cried Hill, "good old Berridge used to give notice, 'Mr. Gwin-napp (one of his lay assistants) will preach upon my horse-block this evening. I wish I could ask him to preach in the church.'"

One of Mr. Hill's last acts was to publish an exhortation to the due observance of the Sabbath, a religious duty upon which he laid much stress.

In the beginning of 1833, debility compelled him to relinquish all his labours, excepting one sermon on the Lord's day. This he would not forego, being resolved, as he himself expressed it, "to die harnessed." On the 31st of March he preached for the last time on 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8. and felt so well that he engaged to preach to the Sunday School teachers of Southwark on the following Tuesday. On that day, however, he was so languid that another took his place, but no sooner was the sermon ended, than he ascended the pulpit and pronounced an affectionate and fervent valedictory. This was his last visit to Surry chapel. On Easter Monday and Tuesday the Sunday School children came as usual in procession to the chapel, but he could not meet them. He prayed for them fervently, however, in his family, watched them from his window, and listened with delight as thousands of young voices sang the beautiful hymns which he had himself composed for them.

On Easter Tuesday, his death was evidently near. At this solemn period he declared, "Were I to live my life over again, I would preach just the same," adding with unfeigned lowliness, "I shall creep into heaven through some crevice in the door." Both when asleep and awake he had often upon his lips his favourite lines,

And when I'm to die,  
Receive me, I'll cry,  
For Jesus hath loved me, I cannot tell why.

To a friend who asked him whether he would renounce his hope for all the world, he replied, "No not for ten thousand worlds." His reason wandered occasionally, but his thoughts, when rational, were all in heaven. It is worthy of remark that his last words



contained a solemn protest against Antinomianism. He died in the evening of April 11, 1833, without a groan or sign of agony.

His funeral was attended by a vast assembly. He was buried at his own request under the pulpit of Surry chapel, and was followed to the grave both by clergymen and dissenting ministers. One of these was his assistant at Wotton, Mr. Jones, who died a few weeks after. The chief mourner was Lord Hill. In the close of the burial service the word *father* was substituted for *brother*, which produced a simultaneous burst of grief. The burial was followed by a sermon from Mr. Jay of Bath. His text was, *Howl fir-tree for the cedar is fallen.*

The residue of his property including his chapels at Wotton and Leamington, was left to the Village Itinerancy.

Rowland Hill's personal appearance is well known to have been attractive and commanding in a high degree. In the prime of life his nobility of aspect won respect and admiration, and even at the age of eighty years his form remained unbent.

His character is so fully developed by the incidents of his life that we think it needless to assist the reader's judgment.

The literary merits of the life before us are but slender. It has been said, indeed, that the worst biographers, in this sense, are the best in every other, because they make their subject prominent alone, and spare the reader needless flourishes. But the work before us exhibits marks of haste in the construction and a want of tact in many points, which tend to mar its excellence. The specimens of Rowland Hill's wit, are either so ill selected or so awkwardly presented, that they seldom do credit. We doubt however, whether this is altogether the fault of the biographer. Wit seems scarcely to have had a place among the attributes of Hill: his pleasantry consisted very much in manner, and in a certain hearty, but far from delicate humour. We must do justice however to the piety and candour manifested in this pleasing volume. Of the latter a striking instance is the distinct admission made by the biographer of his aged relative's infirmities and errors.

Our object in this article has been to present the leading points of the biography, for the entertainment of those who have not opportunity or leisure to peruse the work at large. We shall conclude with a few detached particulars noted in perusal, which we could not introduce into the tissue of the narrative.

Notwithstanding Rowland Hill's vivacity and ardour, he was always noted for equanimity of temper. Mr. Sidney, who was his relative and ward, bears witness to the fact, that he never knew him to give way to uncontrolled irritability under the most trying excitement.

His favourite amusement was gardening, which enabled him to contribute to the comforts of the poor. He was often seen,

early in the summer, with a basket, gathering the few ripe strawberries for some sick parishioners. He was also fond of looking at prints exposed in shop windows, during which employment he attracted much attention from the crowd. When the increasing dimness of his sight forbade much reading, he amused himself with making play-things for the children of his friends. "Some folks," he used to say, "appear as if they had been bathed in *crab verjuice* in their infancy, which penetrated through their skins and made them sour-blooded ever since, but this will not do for a messenger of the Gospel."

A certain minister excused his dry mode of preaching by the quaint remark, that Samson slew the Philistines with the jaw bone of an ass. "True," said Rowland Hill, "but it was a moist jaw bone."

Mr. Hill appears to have been very faithful in pastoral visitation, always performing that service as a religious one. He never failed however to exhort the poor to neatness in their household. "Here mistress," he would say, "is a trifle to buy soap and a scrubbrush. There is plenty of water to be had for nothing. Good Mr. Whitefield used to say *cleanliness is next to godliness.*"

He was noted for the skill with which he measured his instructions and reproof by the character and wants of those whom he instructed and reproved. To the humble Christian he was very tender, but showed little mercy to hypocrisy or cant. He once rebuked an Antinomian who was given to strong drink. The man flippantly asked, "do you think, Mr. Hill, that a glass of spirits will drive grace out of my heart?" "No," said he, "for there is no grace in it."

Long speeches were his abomination. His own were always short; and on one occasion, at an anniversary in London he administered a dose of friendly advice to an offender of this kind, which delighted the audience, and for that time remedied the evil.

The great charm of his preaching, next to its unaffectedness and ardour, was the richness of his illustrations from external objects. For these he was continually on the watch and treasured up his minutest observations for this hallowed use. Mr. Sidney gives some pleasing specimens of this kind, and records a saying of Robert Hall, that since the days of our Saviour no man had in this respect exceeded Rowland Hill.

The last point of view in which we shall exhibit him, is that of a religious poet. Some of Mr. Hill's hymns will be coeval with the English language, having a principle of life within them even when detached from the delightful music by which they were accompanied in Surry chapel. In December 1803, he

preached to the volunteers, and introduced his noble hymn to the tune of "God save the king," the first stanza of which is as follows :

Come thou incarnate word,  
Gird on thy mighty sword,  
Our prayer attend !  
Come and thy people bless,  
Spirit of holiness  
On us descend.

Some of his hymns composed for Sunday Schools are distinguished for simplicity and pathos. But of all his poetical effusions, none perhaps is more interesting than the beautiful hymn which he repeated on his death bed, and a part of which we here transcribe, as it appears in Mr. Sidney's volume for the first time.

Gently, my Saviour, let me down,  
To slumber in the arms of death,  
I rest my soul on thee alone  
E'en till my last expiring breath.

Dear Saviour, let thy will be done,  
Like yielding clay I humbly be,  
May every murmuring thought begone,  
Most peacefully resigned to die.

Bid me possess sweet peace within,  
Let child-like patience keep my heart,  
Then shall I feel my heaven begin,  
Before my spirit hence depart.

Then shall my raptured spirit raise,  
Still louder notes than angels sing,  
High glories to Emanuel's grace,  
My God, my Saviour, and my King.

For a Christian, this is epitaph and elegy enough.

ART. VII.—*Hints towards a more Complete Organization of Particular Churches, with Reference to Christian activity.\**

*J. W. Alexander*

WE have few more prolific writers than Dr. Sprague, and none whose productions are more uniformly popular and instructive. In composition, as in music, that is found to be agreeable to the unsophisticated taste, which flows most readily, and naturally

\* Hints, designed to regulate the intercourse of Christians. By W. B. Sprague, D. D., Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Albany. Albany: Packard & Van Benthuysen, 1834. 12mo. pp. 269.

from the performer. The works of our author are very remarkable for their gentle fluency of thought and diction, and for the absence of those pangs of preparation, and overwhelming loads of ostensible erudition, which characterize many otherwise good books. We are not aware that Dr. Sprague has given to the world, any production of a merely theoretical kind; it has been his aim to address the mass of our intelligent population, upon topics of universal interest and practical moment. To justify our remark we need only refer to the Letters to a Daughter, the Lectures to Young People, and more particularly, the able work upon Revivals of Religion.

The modest title does not invite attention so strongly as the contents would warrant. These *hints* are much more than hints, forming as they do, a popular system of the Christian Ethics of Social Life. They are designed to raise the standard of religion, and so to add strength to the church. Beginning at the fireside and the circle of home, the author contemplates the believer in all his social connexions, and expounds the scriptural precepts which relate to each. The great ends of religious intercourse are first held up to view; the improvement of the individual, and the salvation of his fellow-men. The basis of this intercourse is laid open, as consisting of the sameness of relation, character, pursuits, and destiny. The hinderances are detailed, whether arising from the mock politeness of the age, and the want of moral taste, or from the deeper evil habits of the soul. The humble Christian is taught *how* he must meet and move among his brethren, with frankness, with fraternal kindness, with dignity and with devotion. And the occasions on which these tempers are to be displayed in fit action are well described, as well the public as the private cases. The case of a believer in a state of apathy, or of despondency, or of temptation, or of grief, is presented, with its appropriate rule; and also the more general occasions of social duty. The family connexion, and the intercourse of high and low, rich and poor, the exchange of epistolary tokens, or of argument, all have their place. Christian intercourse is shown to have its abuses, and due cautions are well and truly interposed. And the motives and duties which are peculiar to the present age are pointed out in a lucid and satisfactory manner.

But every believer has a class of duties, which he owes to the unconverted world; with the statement and inculcation of these, the second part of the work is occupied. The whole is admirably clear and practical, and adapted to the use of true Christians in every branch of the church. In a word, we are happy to commend it, as a work well fitted to be presented to pro-

fessors of religion, and a useful directory in regard to those claims which religion is making upon them—not at distant intervals or solemn occasions—but every hour that they live.

But we are not ready to yield unqualified praise, even where we greatly admire. The faults of the book are chiefly negative, and they are apparent in all that proceeds from the accomplished author. There are no sins against correctness, delicacy, purity, or propriety; all is fluent, harmonious, fair and smooth. But we feel that Dr. Sprague is sometimes too smooth, too flowing, and that his gentle manner approaches at times to monotony. His thoughts are given too fully, and the reader is not often enough left to fill up links in the discussion. We could desire the gifted author sometimes to give vent to strong feeling, even at the risk of a roughness or a discord. Greater condensation, and an occasional descent to the racy, idiomatical phraseology of common life, though they might cause a ripple in the glassy current, would awaken attention, and penetrate the heart. As it is, the impression of the work is that which proceeds from the aggregate of its excellencies; what we desire is, that more effect should be given to single passages. And the power to do this is abundantly possessed by the author; for in many cases the simple hinderance to force is undue amplification. The excision of many parts, in themselves unexceptionable, would, in our judgment, increase the weight of what remains, in the direct ratio of its density. None of us, indeed, seem sufficiently willing to transfer to prose what Waller has said of verse:

“Poets lose half the praise they should have got,  
Could it be known what they discreetly blot.”

We regard the whole subject of this practical work as highly important, since a great part of true religion consists in the due performance of the social offices, as we may learn from the extent to which scriptural precepts and exhortations on these topics are carried. It is true, that the frame-work of right action in the Christian life is to be sought in the genuine affections of the renewed heart. It is no less true that the basis of all gracious affections is the system of doctrinal truth revealed by inspiration. But nevertheless, it is necessary that all Christian teachers should be much employed in directing believers into particular paths of duty, and that they should even descend to the specialties of ordinary intercourse, and its resulting obligations. As the universal church was instituted for the furtherance of universal piety, to embody and manifest the holy plans of grace in the hearts and lives of saints, so we find it to be the appropriate func-

tion of each particular church to secure and foster and set forth the piety of its members. And as we hold the organization of the church, so far as it is carried out upon scriptural principles, to be a lovely example of simple order and well balanced energy, so we think it desirable that in every congregation of believers, there should be a like organization for the same purposes.

In these observations we have no reference to judicial or disciplinary measures; with regard to these our form of government affords all which could be desired. But there are in every community of Christians a multitude of arrangements which are left very much to the discretion of the church-officers and members, and which vary with every change of place or persons. It is right that cords should not be drawn too tightly, and that this discretionary power should be lodged where it is; nor would we argue for any iron code which should force the churches into a formal routine of service. At the same time, we believe it is found in the experience of every pastor and church session, that much good, which might be accomplished within the bosom of single congregations, is wholly omitted, simply because there is no general directory, or model scheme, for this class of fluctuating duties. There are churches among us, whose energies are pressed to the utmost point of tension, which are constantly and systematically working nobly in every good cause; and there are others, of equal power, which are lying utterly torpid. The one has a plan, and acts upon it: the other has no such plan. And the cases are numerous, and within the recollection of many pastors, in which the mere news of successful effort, carried from one of the former to one of the latter class, has had the effect of transfusing life into the dead. Better than mere intelligence from one would be the digested results of intelligence from many churches; or what is the same thing, a wise directory for the internal organization of all; so drafted as to avoid the extremes of unprofitable vagueness on the one hand, and pragmatical dictation on the other. Far be it from us to endeavour to sketch such a plan. To be what we have imagined, it must be the mature fruit of wise delay; the grand result of many experiments, counsels, prayers, and labours. The field is very wide. On one part of it the book before us throws a pleasing light; and in the desultory remarks which follow, we wish to be understood as simply presenting hints, which we hope may be seeds of thought and action in the minds of pious and practical men.

All the comparisons used in Scripture to shadow forth the church, convey the idea of a fair and regular arrangement. As Christ is the Head, so in him, the whole body, *fitly joined together*, and *compact*, συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συνβιβασμένον, *by that*

*which every joint supplieth*, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. The whole idea is beautifully developed, and we rejoice in our own scheme of polity as admirably consonant with this divine arrangement. Yet, as has been observed, when we descend to the actual operations of the church in its smaller divisions, as it regards Christian effort, we are struck with the total absence of method. Not that our form of government has left particular churches without organization. Besides the pastor, we recognize ruling elders and deacons, as necessary to the full and faithful operations of every church; the former as assessors in government, the latter as organs for charitable communications, and helpers in temporal things. As to ruling elders, it is observable, that even where the ecclesiastical theory of any churches would seem to exclude them, they are often virtually introduced under another name. The early English Puritans valued their services as "associated with the ministers in the spiritual government;" many Independents held the same opinion; and they were recognised among the Puritans of New England, not merely by individuals, but by public bodies. See Dr. Miller's *Essay on the Nature and Duties of the office of Ruling Elders*, chap. vii. The duties of ruling elders are found also to demand the services of vestry-men, churchwardens, and standing-committees, among the two sects which most strenuously repudiate the *name*. But we mention these officers at this time not so much in their character of rulers, as in that of spiritual assistants.

All the charities, and some of the temporalities of the church, were at an early day committed to *Deacons*. "The apostles (says Fuller) sometimes conceived that the very distribution of alms to the poor, had something of worldly drossiness therein, (called by them *servicing of tables*) as if only the preaching of the word were a spiritual employment."\* We lament to perceive that in so many churches there is a practical denial of our principles manifested in the neglect to appoint such officers; and that some ignorantly imagine that they differ from ruling elders only in name: there is no church in which there is not a call for that specific service which is enjoined upon these officers; no church in which there are not many objects of benevolence, or in which the care of temporalities might not be advantageously resigned to men possessing the scriptural qualifications of *Deacons*.

So much for the officers of particular churches. As far as the

\* Fuller's *Church Hist.* B. III. p. 81.

system was intended to reach, it answers every end. But the church may be reduced to greater regularity of action, in all that pertains to the things of God. In the great works of benevolence, for instance, is it not evident that the energies of the church are not fully brought out? Is it not evident, that the greater part of what is done, is done by a few churches? and that even in many of these, the effect is produced by a few individuals? And is there any one who does not perceive, that the change would be immense if, by any regular system, the whole of our churches were going forward with the alacrity and efficiency which characterize a few? More organization, however perfect, cannot, we allow, accomplish this; for the most exquisite mechanism of wheels and springs, requires a primary power to give it motion. But organization will accomplish all that it ever does accomplish in any department. The power already exists, though latent; all that we need is the mechanism which shall give it an outlet.

There is something beautiful in systematic arrangement; and it is as useful as it is beautiful. In moral enterprises, as in arts, it economizes power, and gives concentration to forces which, taken singly are inapplicable. Every church is a school, and should have its arrangement, in which each should find and retain his place. Or we may compare an assembly of Christians to an army, in which every individual should proceed in his due order and to his proper task. Who can calculate the waste of strength and the endless confusion which would result if the soldiers of a battalion should promiscuously rush to the onset without direction, mutual understanding, or method? Yet something like this takes place in the benevolent but blind and fruitless impulses of many churches. As there is a well-defined and common end, towards which all Christian endeavours converge, so there should be, and there may be, regular and united action among the members.

In addition to the common claims of social life, there are duties incumbent upon every individual member of the militant church, towards the whole body, and towards the family of man. These duties, wherever they may branch forth, are all contained in the golden rule of love. The demand on every church member is a most reasonable one—nothing beyond the strength, circumstances and office of each, and the divine favour is vouchsafed accordingly: for it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. Yet every member is bound to act constantly and fully according to his place and capacity. Because one is a private Christian, it does not by any means follow that he has no duties to perform



in connexion with the general welfare, but the error is too extensively cherished, that there are some who may pursue their pilgrimage with scarcely a thought of personal exertion. Some plan should be attempted which might demand of all such persons the service which they owe, and stimulate them to the performance of what they are prone to overlook. At the present day the departments of benevolent action are so widely spread, and so happily divided, that every one may readily find his place of usefulness. There is no living stone which may not find a place where it shall contribute to the beauty or the strength of the spiritual temple.

The single business of Sunday-School teaching calls for many thousands; and there is no instructed Christian who may not discover some opportunity for the exercise of his gifts in this work.

The work of alms-giving, of temporal relief to the distressed, of consoling the bereaved, and of assisting the sick, should not be exclusively performed by a few. Neither should it be left to the mere promptings of individual piety; because the very poverty which occasions suffering often renders the sufferer unknown. Many languish and even die, in the very heart of large congregations, without having been once touched by the hand of gentle condolence. There ought to be a constant vigilance in this particular, and a regular plan which may secure prompt and effectual assistance to every one who is sick or disabled. And how many are there, whose piety languishes for need of such exertions, and who might be usefully and delightfully employed in such a work of love.

The schemes of public benevolence, which have originated during the last half-century, require the services of a great number as collectors, agents, distributors and the like. And even the work of writing for the press, which is entirely left to the spontaneous endeavours of a few, might be rendered tenfold more effectual if pains were taken to invite to this labour those in all our congregations who possess the requisite qualifications.

Now, although these suggestions propose no definite plan, they are sufficient to show that much labour is wasted and much power left unemployed, and that a more complete internal organization of Christian communities for these objects is needed. It is practicable; inasmuch as a great part of what we propose would at once be attained if in every congregation there were a mutual understanding upon these subjects. The truth is, that at present, there is in most places a lamentable want of concert. One half is ignorant of what the other half is doing. The same object is aimed at by different sets of persons, in two or three

different and conflicting methods; while a large proportion of the intelligence and strength is unemployed. To remedy this, we could desire to have all the Christian operations within a parish fully and deliberately spread before the whole of the people. Monthly, or even weekly meetings for this purpose might be introduced with good results.

We are happy to observe that something of this kind already exists among us, though not to the extent which we desire. Through the efforts of a few zealous men, a plan has been carried into effect for organizing every congregation into an association auxiliary to our Boards of Education and of Missions. The partial success of this scheme should not only render it universal with reference to these great objects, but should suggest the expediency of a more thorough organization, which might systematize and strengthen the whole array of benevolent efforts. And here we are again gratified to know, that in a few churches of distinguished liberality, something even of this complete organization has begun to take effect. The whole business of contribution for whatever object is thrown into one system. Every member is a contributor, and each is educated in the belief that this is no less required, than the performance of the ordinary and acknowledged social duties. The monthly concert of prayer for the spread of the Gospel is found to be a valuable auxiliary, for here the appropriations to the several objects of benevolence are voted, while the minds of those present are enlightened by Christian intelligence, and animated with the glow of devout affection. Every one gives something, and at a certain rate determined by himself, and the consequence is that each one gives far more than he would do, if the matter were left to be done at random. For if those who are forever complaining of the multitude of calls for their charity, and who make this their apology for denial upon every solicitation, would only sum up the total of their donations for a year, they would be astonished to find that it falls short of what even the niggardly would allow to be a reasonable annual subscription. The best of all plans for contribution, we think, is that of the apostle Paul; we mean a weekly appropriation, proportionate to the weekly success of each. This prevents the vexatious "gathering" by agents and collectors, secures a purely spontaneous liberality, and connects the believers' alms with the prayers and affections of the Lord's day. It was the direction of Paul to the churches of Galatia and Corinth, and perhaps to many others: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

After all that has been done towards the diffusion of religious intelligence by means of journals, and other works, there is in every congregation great need of some regular method of showing to the people the necessities and the progress of the great enterprise. For this reason, we deem it indispensable that all the animating facts of a missionary character should be communicated, at least in a summary, to the congregation. We have witnessed the signal efficacy of this in awakening the missionary spirit, creating an avidity for Christian news, and preserving the monthly prayer-meetings from the dulness and ill-attendance which are sure to prevail, where they are enlivened only by the common routine of pulpit exhortation. Instead of superseding the use of public journals, they create a taste and demand for the latter. Let every church have a clear mutual understanding, and a simply efficient arrangement, with reference to public charities, and contributions will be more than tripled, pastors and agents will be relieved, vexatious solicitation will cease, prayer will be intelligent and fervent, and a multitude of new ministers and missionaries will be called out from the bosom of our congregations.

The last chapter of Dr. Sprague's volume is upon "the Christian's intercourse with the unrenewed sinner in respect to his salvation." It abounds with wise and seasonable counsels upon this neglected subject. The author, however, in conformity with the plan of his work, treats of it with reference to the feelings and conduct of the individual Christian. The inquiry would be interesting, how far the endeavours of church-members in this branch of duty admit of being reduced to system. The conversion of souls is, undoubtedly, committed primarily to the charge of the session; but no one will deny, that all, without exception, should be engaged in it, according to the ability and relations of each. Some do nothing at all; and others, in what they attempt merely thwart the wiser efforts of their brethren, crossing their path, and neutralizing their influence. The urgent admonitions of Dr. Sprague, with regard to an obligation which all are ready to set aside, may be profitably read by every one who has a heart to love his fellow-men.

In the work of systematic instruction, we are not cheered with those tokens of advancement which appear in most parts of religious duty. The efforts which are made seem too often to be made at random. It is a delightful truth to the pastor, that his church, taken collectively, is his pupil, and as such may be *educated*, no less than his child. To do this there must be a plan; there must be a regular gradation of scriptural instruction; the whole scheme of truth must be gradually unfolded. Not only

must the babes have milk, but the mature must have strong meat. Hence the deplorable consequences of a merely hortatory style of preaching; exciting feeling without the basis of sound knowledge. Hence also the injurious effects produced by a frequent translation of ministers; as no man can *pursue* his wise plan of gospel instruction with a new flock; or *continue* it with equal advantage where his predecessor has left off: while time is lost, both to pastor and people, if he *begins* it anew at each successive removal. All should be under instruction. Besides the preaching of the Gospel, and the stated exposition of the word, resort must be had to the catechetical circle, the Sunday school, the Bible class, and the religious lecture. But why may not *all the members of the church* be engaged in this kind of labour? The principle of *mutual instruction* admits of a most happy adaptation to the wants of the church in this respect. Under the direction of the pastor and elders much might be done, and much remains to be done, which is demanded. In addition to the communication of doctrinal knowledge, there should be a discipline to which every young professor should be subjected, the object of which should be the cultivation of the heart. If it were practicable to have every individual taken under some stated supervision and spiritual care from the first moment of his dedicating himself to the Lord, much of the defection which we now lament might be prevented. We have strong objections to the system of class-meetings, as they are conducted and abused, but to the principle of such a thorough organization we yield a most cordial assent. The course pursued with the ancient catechumens has gone too much into disuse; we might here advantageously take lessons of our forefathers. Such a course would go far to remedy that ignorance which cannot escape our observation in the majority of young converts; to humble pride and correct forwardness, to encourage mutual love, reveal errors and abuses, direct pastors in the choice of subjects, and prepare a community of well-furnished Christians. We should rejoice in the proposition of some well digested plan, to secure these ends. As it is, we believe the church has suffered just in proportion as she has receded from the methods pursued in the reformed churches of Holland and Scotland.

Without some provision of this kind, it is absolutely impossible for a minister, in these days of multiform distraction, to know his flock individually, and without such personal acquaintance, it is out of his power to give each a portion in due season. Instruction on experimental and casuistical subjects requires an arrangement of this nature. The very idea of superintendence, the appropriate work of the *bishop*, implies it.

And only where it happily exists can the school of Christ be considered as duly organized.

Many of these observations have a forcible application to the various social meetings which have been instituted for the culture of piety. Over some of these it is necessary that the pastor should preside in person; but there is no reason why a large number of praying circles may not be simultaneously engaged. And where this is the case weekly, there would be a manifest propriety in having a convocation of the whole at longer intervals. At such meetings the minister will always be more able to feel the pulse of his flock than in the more solemn services of the Lord's day.

Yet no meetings of any kind, however wisely or faithfully conducted, can take the place of family and personal visits or interviews. The value of pastoral visitation seems to be more generally acknowledged than it was a few years ago; and no pulpit services are reckoned an indemnification for the want of this. Visits of religious instruction and inquiry, should be frequent and regular. Unless they are pursued statedly, and with reference to some system, they are apt to be neglected, are unequally distributed, and degenerated into mere "calls" of friendship. For let it be observed, that the life of a minister is too precious and too short to be frittered away in the exchange of ceremonious courtesies. These visits must be strictly *religious* visits; otherwise they are not purely *pastoral*. But our object in broaching this apparently foreign subject, is to suggest that these duties are not so intimately connected with the ministerial office, that they may not be performed by laymen. Not only the elder or the deacon, but the pious private Christian may, and ought to exercise his gifts in this way. There are few congregations in which such gifts do not exist in some humble believers; often more remarkably than in the pastor himself; and where there are such talents in the church, they should be drawn out and improved. Is there no plan by which in every congregation a number of helpers in this indispensable work may be associated for regular action, in aid of the session? While it is true, that some ministers culpably neglect this duty, it also true that the demands of the people are sometimes exorbitant. More is required than it is possible for frail humanity to render. The requisitions of the age upon a minister are greater than they ever were before. Besides his pastoral work, there may be said to fall upon him "daily, the care of all the churches;" inasmuch as he is *ex officio*, the link of union between his people and the grand benevolent associations for the propagation of the Gospel.

Upon this subject there are some forcible remarks of the late Dr. Mason, in a discourse on the resignation of his pastoral charge. Without feeling at liberty to adopt his sentiments in all their extent, we quote them as well meriting the candid attention of our churches. "There are two things (says he) in which the state of the churches now, differs materially from their state in primitive times. In the first place, they had inspired teachers; who could, therefore, spend the whole week in exhorting, confirming, and consoling their converts, without infringing on their preparations for the Lord's day. Our situation is quite different: close and habitual study is necessary for us. And if we cannot get time to attend to it, our ministrations grow uninteresting, and our congregations lean. In the next place the primitive churches never permitted themselves to suffer for want of labourers. *Our* economical plan is, to make one pastor do the work which was anciently done by three or four, and the very natural consequence follows; the work is badly done, or the workman is sacrificed. If we were to visit as much as our people are good enough to wish, and unreasonable enough to expect, we should not have an hour left for our proper business; we could make no progress in the knowledge of the Scriptures; and not one would be able to preach a sermon worthy of a sensible man's hearing."

These opinions may be abused—they are however just and reasonable. And the inference we would deduce is, that the pastor of every church should have an organized assistance in this part of his labours.

In short—for we must hasten to cut short these desultory and protracted observations—the principle of organization, so far as the circumstances allow, should be carried out into the details of church-operations. The great object should be, the advancement of the collective church. For every supposable emergency there should be a plan devised. Every individual and every work should be under supervision and control; every thing should be governed by mutual counsel and animated by mutual knowledge. New and important measures should not be left to the heat of sudden emergencies, but should be dictated by the choice results of safe experience. These results should be thrown into the common stock, by being communicated to the public. Thus, (as in science and arts the happy inventions of a few infallibly become the methods of the whole philosophical world,) we should see a unity of efficient action prevailing in all the congregations of true believers.

With these reflections, suggested by the excellent work before us, we commit the whole subject to the meditation and prayers of the reader.



