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ART. I.—*A Practical View of Regeneration.*

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THAT human nature has lost that moral purity and perfection with which it was originally endued, is a truth which lies at the foundation of the Christian religion. Indeed, we see not how it can be denied by the deist, without casting a gross reflection on the character of God. It is only from the Scriptures, however, that we learn the origin of evil. Here we read, that God made man upright, but he hath sought out many inventions. Man being in honour continued not. When God created man he formed him in his own image and after his own likeness; and what that image consisted in, the apostle Paul informs us, when he speaks of the new creation. "And that ye 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." The phrase "after God," means after the image of God. This is expressed in the parallel passage, "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." By the fall this moral image was effaced. The mind which had been illumined by divine truth became spiritually blind; the heart whose exercises had been holy

and harmonious, became corrupt, the hot-bed of every vicious propensity, and the centre of darkness and disorder. Instead of moral beauty, there was now deformity. In the place of pure felicity, misery succeeded. The soul was now turned with aversion from God and holiness, and the affections attached themselves to the creature. Reason and conscience no longer had control over the inferior passions and appetites; but these, seizing the reins of government, urged man on to carnal indulgences inconsistent with purity and peace. Being now alienated from God, man became his own centre around which he endeavoured to make all things revolve, from which the most direful disorder ensued; yet he persists in acting upon this principle of supreme selfishness. Although this depravity was from its commencement total, inasmuch as all holy exercise and all holy motives were banished from the mind; yet is human iniquity capable of indefinite increase. Its natural progress is from bad to worse, without a conceivable limit. All therefore are not equal in sin and guilt. The same person is comparatively innocent when he commences his course, to what he becomes at the end of a long life of transgression. And the enormity of his guilt, as well as the obstinate perverseness of his evil nature, depends on the clearness of the light resisted, and the multitude of the mercies abused. Wickedness may attain its greatest visible height among the heathen, but in the sight of God, self-righteous Pharisees are more guilty than Publicans; and Bethsaida, Chorazin and Capernaum will have a more intolerable doom than Tyre and Sidon, or even than Sodom itself. The deepest guilt is contracted under the clear sunshine of the gospel, and by those whose privileges, opportunities, calls and professions, lay them under the strongest obligations to love and serve their Creator.

The proof of the wickedness of man is found in every part of the Bible; and it is a truth confirmed by all history and all experience. That a reformation would be desirable, and that all men need to be made better than they are, will not be denied. But there is a deep-rooted opinion in the minds of men, that this reformation and return to the service of God, will be easy whenever they shall determine upon it. The need of a supernatural power to regenerate the soul is not commonly felt; and when men begin to be convinced of their impotence as it relates to holy acts, they are prone to make their depravity, which is the only cause of their inability, their excuse.

The necessity of regeneration arises from the fact, that man by the fall has become dead in sin. Spiritual life is extinct, and, therefore, if any are saved, they must be regenerated. Life cannot spring from death. Life is the gift of God in all cases. He breathed into man, when his body was formed out of the clay, the breath of life. It would be as reasonable to believe that the organized body could inspire itself with life, as that the dead soul can perform acts of spiritual life. All men having fallen into the same spiritual death, all need regeneration. Some men are amiable in their natural temper, and regular in their external behaviour; but these also are naturally blind and depraved. They have no right apprehensions of God, no holy affections towards him, no cheerful and habitual purpose to serve him. They need therefore to be converted, however highly they may be esteemed among men. Though such, like the young ruler who came to Christ, may have many amiable qualities which entitle them to the love of their friends, yet, like him, they may *lack one thing*. Their hearts may be fixed, like his, on worldly objects. Let all such, therefore, be assured that, as well as others, they *must be born again*. Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God searcheth the heart; and often that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. Under a fair exterior there often lies concealed a heart full of unbelief, pride, and ingratitude. By the restraints of education, an enlightened conscience, and a regard to reputation, sin may be kept from breaking out into enormous and shameful actions; but the seeds of all iniquity are concealed in every heart. Men are satisfied commonly if they can so regulate their lives as to escape the censure of men, and the disgrace which follows wicked actions, but they pay little attention to their hearts which are as a cage of unclean birds. Most men are not in the habit of judging of their thoughts, imaginations and feelings, by the holy law of God, which condemns every wandering of desire, every unhallowed temper, and every want of supreme and perfect love. If we look upon our own hearts we must be convinced that all is not right within. If our hearts are naturally good, why do they turn away with strong secret aversion from the spiritual service of God? If our hearts are not dead to God, why are we not daily delighted with the contemplation of his glorious attributes? Why is prayer a burden? Why are we so entirely engrossed with sensible and worldly pursuits and pleasures? And if the moral and amiable need regeneration, what shall

we say of the multitudes who are living in open rebellion against God? The profane, the unjust, the intemperate, the licentious, the scoffer, the false-swearer, the defrauder of the widow and the orphan, the sabbath-breaker, the liar, the neglecters of God's worship, the slanderer, and a multitude of others who live habitually in known sin, surely need to be reformed, and they will never be thoroughly reformed until they are regenerated. Such must put off the old man with his corrupt deeds, and put on the new man. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God who will abundantly pardon." There is an urgent necessity that every sinner should repent, for true repentance is *unto life*. And what our Lord declared to the Jews is true of all, and was intended for all, "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish," and Paul preached to the Athenians that "God now commandeth all men every where to repent, because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, of which he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead." Evangelical repentance, conversion and regeneration, are substantially the same. They all signify a thorough change of views, affections, purposes and conduct; and this change is every where declared to be essential to salvation. And this is not a merely arbitrary constitution. No one is capable of the enjoyment of heavenly felicity who has never been born again. Without spiritual life, what would the sinner do in heaven? If men have no love to God, nor relish for his service, heaven is no place for them. Heaven is a holy place, and all the exercises and employments are holy, therefore, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." And to be holy, *ye must be born again*.

Having considered the necessity of regeneration, we come now to speak of the power by which it is effected—of the instrument in accomplishing it—and of its nature and effects.

Regeneration must be the peculiar work of God, because it is "a new creation," and no power but that of God is adequate to such a work. It is a resurrection from the worst kind of death, and none can inspire the dead with life but the Almighty. It is giving sight to the blind, and opening the eyes which never saw the light of day, to behold the beauty of holiness, and the glory of God; but the same power which in the beginning caused light to shine out of darkness, must



shine into our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. "Except a man be born of water and the spirit he cannot see the kingdom of God." "The wind bloweth where it listeth, &c. so is every one that is born of the spirit." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." Those who are the sons of God are not "born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Paul calls this change "the washing of regeneration," and "the renewing of the Holy Ghost." And David prays, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." But why multiply proofs of a truth so evident from reason as well as Scripture? If there be any such internal change of the heart, God must be its author; for how else could it be produced? "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." If a tree be evil, who can make it good, but he who created it? If the heart be deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, will it purify itself? If all the thoughts and imaginations of man's heart are evil and only evil and that continually, whence will spring a holy nature? For a sinner to regenerate himself would be as absurd an idea, as for a man to create or beget himself. It is God that begins this good work within his people, and he will carry it on.

As God the Holy Spirit is the Author of regeneration; so the instrument employed is the WORD OF GOD. This is as clearly taught in Scripture as that God is the author or efficient cause. God is able to work without means, but both in the worlds of nature and of grace it has pleased him to employ appropriate means for the accomplishment of his own ends. But although we know the fact that there is an established connexion between means and ends; yet we are not competent to explain, in any case, how the end is produced by the means employed. Our animal frame is formed, and organized, and nourished, and kept alive, and recovered from disease by means adapted to these ends, but no one can explain the secret process of nature in these operations. Curious inquiries respecting the way in which the word is instrumental in the production of this change are not for edification. Sometimes regeneration is considered distinctly from the acts and exercises of the mind which proceed from it, but in the Holy Scriptures the cause and effect are included; and we shall therefore treat the subject in this practical and popular form. The instrumentality of the word can never

derogate from the efficient agency of the Spirit in this work. The Spirit operates by and through the word. The word derives all its power and penetrating energy from the Spirit. Without the omnipotence of God the word would be as inefficient as clay and spittle, to restore sight to the blind. Ezekiel was commanded to prophesy over the dry bones in the valley of vision. Thus ministers are now sent to call upon those who are dead in trespasses and sins, to awake and arise from the dead, but none will obey their voice, unless a divine power accompanies their words. Men, it is true, are rational and accountable agents, and are therefore proper subjects of commands and exhortations; yet are they destitute of spiritual life, and no power but that of God as we have seen can communicate life. When the Spirit operates by the word, the soul before dead in sin is rendered susceptible of impressions from divine truth. The entrance of the truth under this divine influence gives light, and excites holy affections, which prompt to good purposes, and as a matter of course, the external actions are in obedience to the law of God. The man becomes a new creature. His wicked life is reformed. Actions before materially good are now performed from love to God and with a view to his glory. That the word of God is indeed the instrument or means of producing this change is evident from many plain testimonies of Scripture; such as the following, "The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul." "The testimonies of the Lord are sure making wise the simple." "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." "Being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever." Therefore the word of God is called "the sword of the Spirit," and is said to be "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." So in the exposition of the parable of the sower, our Lord says, "The seed is the word of God." And this seed, when sown on good ground bringeth forth fruit manifold. "For these are they which hear the word and receive it and bring forth fruit." The most precious seed never vegetates nor brings forth fruit, until it receives a vivifying influence from without; so the word of God, unaccompanied by the influences of the Holy Spirit, remains unfruitful, however often it may be



heard or read; or however it may be treasured in the memory or theoretically understood. To have fruit it is not only necessary to have good seed, but good ground. Make the tree good and the fruit shall be good; for a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. There is need of a quickening influence on the dead soul of the sinner to render it capable of apprehending and appreciating the truth. In the order of causation life must precede action, but in the order of time the communication of life and the acts of the new creature are simultaneous. Lazarus was called from the dead by the voice of Christ, but he must have been inspired with life before he could hear that voice. But still it is proper to say, that he was called into life by the omnipotent voice of our Saviour. So when the gospel is preached, the dead hear the voice of the Son of God and live. Or we may illustrate the instrumentality of the word by the case of the blind man whose eyes our Lord opened. This man, when he first looked up, saw objects indistinctly, "men as trees walking;" but when he looked a second time, he saw all things clearly. Christ caused this man to see by the light of heaven which shone around him; but the power causing him to see was exerted on the eye, removing the obstacles to vision, or supplying what was defective in the organ. As soon as this was done, the light was the medium of the perception of surrounding objects. Thus the soul of every man is by nature blind. The light may shine around him, but he comprehendeth it not. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." By the energy of the Holy Spirit this incapacity of spiritual vision is taken away; the eyes of the understanding are enlightened. The blindness is removed, and spiritual objects are perceived; but alas! with most, very indistinctly at first. "The light of the just increaseth more and more unto the perfect day." Truth is just as necessary to every spiritual act and exercise, as light is to vision. Where the truth is not apprehended there can be no faith, for faith is a belief of the truth; there can be no love, for it is by the truth that the excellencies of the character of God and Christ are made known. Without the knowledge of the truth, there can be no repentance, for this is the light which shows the holiness and extent of the law and the evil of sin. Thus it is evident that without the truth there can be no holy exercise and no true obedience. Therefore, we never find the Holy Spirit

operating on adults but as accompanying the word of truth. We can conceive of a preparation of the heart to receive the truth before it is known, as in fact the knowledge of the truth is acquired very gradually. Thus we can conceive of a divine agency on the heart of a heathen, by which he would be disposed to receive the truth as soon as it should be made known. Such a divine influence does probably prepare the way for the success of the gospel; but where the word is never sent, there we have no evidence that the Spirit exerts his renovating influence on the minds of men. Thus also we can form some idea how infants may be regenerated. As they are capable of no moral exercises at present, they do not need the truth; but the Spirit of God can so renovate their depraved souls as to render them capable of apprehending and feeling the truth, as soon as their faculties are sufficiently developed; whether in this world or in another. And as we are all by nature children of wrath—conceived in sin—and dead, infants need regeneration as really as adults, and cannot enjoy the holy happiness of heaven without such a renovation of their fallen nature.

From the connexion which God has established in ordinary cases between the word and regeneration, we see the importance of sending the gospel to the heathen, and of having the good seed of the word sown as much as possible in every soul. The word should be preached in season and out of season, and the truth should be inculcated on the minds of children from their earliest years. Here is work in which all may engage and be useful. Hence also we learn how precious the book of God is which contains his holy word, and how desirable it is to have it faithfully translated into all languages, and circulated round the earth, until every family shall be in possession of the ORACLES OF GOD. For not only is the preaching of the word of God, but also the reading of the Holy Scriptures, an effectual means of salvation. Agreeably to that in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, “The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation.” Paul was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, “for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”

That usually a conviction of sin takes place previously to a change of heart, is a fact of common experience: and there seems to be a solid reason for this, that the sinful moral agent

may be sensible of his miserable condition before he is delivered from it. As man naturally seeks to justify himself by his own righteousness, it is necessary that he should be cut off from this dependence on a broken law, which is now 'weak through the flesh,' and cannot bring him to life; and that he should see and feel that he is already justly condemned, and must despair of relief from the law. God permits the awakened sinner to try what he can do towards saving himself, until wearied with his own ineffectual efforts, he is brought to feel that he is indeed a lost sinner, and that there is no hope for him but in the sovereign mercy of God, on which he has no claim. It is suitable that when so great a benefit as pardon and eternal life is bestowed, it should be so conferred, as that the unworthy recipient should be fully convinced that it is a free gift, and an undeserved favour which might be most justly withheld. Otherwise the saved sinner would not feel a deep sense of his obligations; and his gratitude for free grace through eternity would not be so ardent. Some, however, are inclined to the opinion that conviction of sin, which is of any real value, is subsequent to regeneration, and forms a part of that evangelical repentance which all the chosen of God experience. They suppose, that mere legal terrors, which are often felt by the reprobate here, and by all the wicked in hell, can have no necessary connexion with regeneration; and that that deep sense of the turpitude and demerit of sin, which commonly precedes a sense of reconciliation, and is by many thought to precede regeneration, is really a consequence of that spiritual change, and a sure evidence that it has taken place. As the question only relates to the order of the exercises of the true penitent, it seems unnecessary to occupy time in discussing it. On both sides, it is agreed, that mere legal convictions, however the conscience may be awakened, and the soul agitated with terror, are no evidences of a change of heart. And it is also agreed, that all regenerate persons are brought to a deep sense of the intrinsic evil of sin, and this leads them inevitably to the conclusion, that God would be just if he should inflict upon them that condign punishment which he has threatened in his word. Indeed, when the mind is spiritually enlightened to see something of the great evil of sin, the penitent soul cannot help taking the part of God against itself, and approving of its own condemnation.

The question is sometimes asked, whether is regeneration an instantaneous or a gradual work? This is not a merely

speculative question. If this is a gradual work, the soul may for some time, yea, for years, be hanging between life and death, and be in neither the one state nor the other, which is impossible. Suppose a dead man to be brought to life by a divine power, as Lazarus was, could there be any question whether the communication of life was immediate? Even if the vital principle was so weak as not to manifest itself at once, yet its commencement must be instantaneous; because it may be truly asserted that such a man is dead or alive; if the former, life has not commenced, and whenever that state ceases, the man lives, for there is no intermediate state. So in regard to the communication of spiritual life, the same thing may be asserted; for whatever regeneration is, the transition from a state of nature to a state of grace must occur at some point of time, the moment before which the sinner was unregenerate. This will be true even upon the principles of those who believe that the exercises of the regenerate man are not specifically different from those which are found in natural men under the common operations of the Spirit, but that the difference is merely in degree. For according to this theory, there will be some certain degree at which the man may be pronounced regenerate; at any inferior degree he is unregenerate; then the moment in which he passes from the next inferior degree to that in which regeneration consists is the moment of his regeneration. We suppose that they who are pleased with this notion of the nature of regeneration would fix upon the time when pious feelings and desires become predominant as the period when the man is regenerated; but this must occur at some particular moment, and thus, regeneration is immediate and not gradual. By gradual regeneration, however, they may mean a gradual preparation for that state, by a continual increase of good desires and resolutions up to the time when the man becomes a true Christian. Upon this hypothesis, the correct way of speaking would be to say that the preparatory work was gradual, but regeneration itself instantaneous. As if this change were compared to the entrance into some inclosure. The line of separation between the space within and without is passed in a moment; yet in coming to it many steps may have been required, and much time employed. But this theory of regeneration which makes it to be nothing else but an increase of previously existing principles is not consistent with reason, experience, or Scripture. Indeed, there would be no propriety in the use of the word on this hypothesis: for such a change



would be nothing else but the growth of a principle already in existence. To regenerate is to beget again, to give origin to a kind of life not already existing in the person. Again, according to this theory, there may be an almost inconceivably small difference between the regenerate and unregenerate. Suppose the latter to have advanced to the point nearest to the line of demarcation, of course the difference between him and the man who has actually passed the line may be so small that it cannot be distinctly conceived: and yet one of these is supposed to go to heaven, while the other is sent to hell. It is true that grace in the feeblest saint prevails over sin and the world habitually; but sometimes iniquities prevail against him for a season, as in the case of David and Peter. Upon this theory the believer, in every such case, must be fallen from grace; for if regeneration took place when good affections predominated, when at any time they lose their predominance, the believer must have fallen from his regenerate state, which opinion is held by some Arminians, who maintain that both David and Peter had entirely lost the principle of grace and had fallen into condemnation. But the true Scriptural doctrine is, that there is a specific difference between the exercises of the regenerate and the unregenerate. In the one there is true faith, sincere love to God, and genuine repentance, whereas in the other, there are no such exercises, in any degree. There may be resemblances and counterfeits, but in souls dead in trespasses and sins, there exists no faith, no sincere love, nor any other exercise of the spiritual life. The carnal mind is enmity against, and is not subject to the law of God, neither can be. But when regeneration takes place, although the exercises of piety may for a time be feeble, yet everlasting life is begun; such a soul can never perish for it is united to Christ by an indissoluble union.

The commencement of this work is often involved in much obscurity, as in the case of those who have been religiously educated, and have been early made the subjects of the saving operations of the Holy Spirit. Such persons having never run to the same excess of wickedness as many others, the change in their external conduct is not very perceptible; and having been regenerated at a period of life when their knowledge was small, and their judgment weak, they are unable to determine satisfactorily the nature of their early impressions. In consequence of this, and from observing a more remarkable change in others, they are led to call in



question the reality of their conversion. Indeed, there is much danger lest unregenerate persons should, through the exceeding deceitfulness of the heart, confound the tender impressions which are sometimes experienced by youth religiously instructed, with the saving work of the Holy Spirit. External regularity and decency of deportment, with a respect for religion, and occasional fits of compunction, and strong desires of salvation, have induced many to cherish a fallacious hope; and sometimes pious parents and ministers from a solicitous desire to see the young taking their place in the church, have been accessory to this delusion. And the danger of deception is greatly increased, when artificial means of excitement are applied to a mind tenderly awake to the importance of religion. Under such influences, many, after a season of agitation, have experienced an animal exhilaration, or a calm which naturally succeeds a storm, and have hastily taken up the fond persuasion that they had experienced a change of heart, when all that has been felt is nothing more than the workings of nature, or at most the convictions and desires which arise from the common influences of the Spirit. When such persons are persuaded to enter the communion of the church hastily, one of two events will ensue. Either they will forsake their profession and fall back to the world; or they will become formalists, and perhaps hypocrites, for life; secretly practising iniquity, and utterly neglecting the religion of the heart, and often of the closet, while their public duties in the church are regularly, and it may be zealously performed. For as such professors have it as an object to lead others to think well of their religion, they will sometimes affect a zeal which is not genuine, and will manifest a strictness bordering on rigour, in external rites and observances. The savour of piety is however wanting, and the spirit of Christian humility and meekness cannot be counterfeited: the very attempt commonly betrays the want of these tempers. And God in his righteous providence often brings false professors into such circumstances, that their true character is manifested to all men. They are permitted to fall into disgraceful sins in the sight of men, or their secret crimes, in which they had long indulged, are made public.

The conversion of some persons is so remarkable, either on account of the greatness and suddenness of the change, or the clearness with which God reveals Christ to their souls, that it is almost impossible for them to doubt the genu-

inensness of their conversion. Such a case was that of Paul. Such also was the conversion of Col. Gardiner. The cases of John Newton and Richard Cecil are somewhat different. They had both gone to great lengths in infidelity and profligacy, so that the change was very great, yet it was not sudden but gradual. Still they seem never to have doubted of the reality of their change.

The views and feelings of all regenerated souls are of the same kind, although they may be exceedingly different in degree, and greatly modified by a variety of circumstances. Probably every case of genuine religious experience has something peculiar. The circumstances which commonly give complexion to these exercises are constitutional temperament, early habits and associations, the doctrinal knowledge possessed, the degree of terror or pungency of conviction which preceded, and the nature of the truths which happen to be first contemplated by the regenerated mind. It is a vain thing, therefore, to attempt to give in exact detail and order, the exercises of the new creature. For one man to make his own experience the standard by which to measure all other Christians is as unreasonable as it would be to insist that all men should be of the same stature, strength, and complexion. But in the midst of this diversity there is a general likeness. The same truths operate on all, and the same affections are excited in all. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." Without undertaking to describe the feelings of the renewed man in their actual succession, we will speak of them in relation to the truths by which they are produced. A regenerated soul has views of God's holy character and of his law, different from any experienced before. The doctrinal or speculative notions may have been correct and extensive, but to the intrinsic excellence of spiritual objects, the unregenerate man is blind. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." The view now enjoyed may be faint and indistinct, but still it is of the right kind, and the emotions which accompany it are new. A reverential fear of God is spread over the soul; a holy awe takes possession of the mind. There is also a deeper impression of the presence, power and majesty of God. His holiness is most distinctly contemplated in the moral law, and we cannot behold the divine image in this glass, without a deep conviction of our

own sinfulness, and lively sorrow for the sins which we have committed. These sins appear now to be exceedingly base, and the soul is not only penetrated with grief, but overwhelmed with shame, ceases not to condemn itself for having consented thus to transgress a holy law, and is deeply humbled in self-abasement before God. There is no longer any disposition to entertain hard thoughts of God as being too severe, but he is fully justified in the inmost convictions of the heart, and the penitent, instead of excusing or palliating his own sins, takes upon himself the whole blame, and freely acknowledges that God would be perfectly just in the infliction of the tremendous penalty of his holy law. Indeed, the view of divine justice is sometimes so clear, and that attribute appears so excellent, that the enlightened soul cannot but approve his own condemnation. He fully acquiesces in the righteousness of the divine administration, although he should be sent to hell.

“And if my soul were sent to hell,  
Thy righteous law approves it well.”

Another emotion which is common to all true penitents, is a pungent sense of ingratitude to the best of beings and kindest of benefactors. There is no view which so certainly breaks and melts the hard heart as a sense of God's goodness; especially of his long suffering and patience which bore with us while we were wickedly rebelling against him. If tears ever flow, this feeling will draw them forth in copious floods. There is one view of sin however which produces an effect without a parallel. It is the representation of its abominable nature in the cross of Christ, in the painful wounds inflicted on his body, in the ignominy to which he was exposed, and above all, in the vials of wrath which were poured out without mixture or mitigation on his holy soul. Here, as it were, in characters of blood, we see depicted the unspeakable turpitude and guilt of sin. Here, at the foot of the cross, the love of sin receives a death-wound, and the heart is divorced from all its long cherished idols. Now the solemn purpose is formed to forsake sin, and to endeavour to live to God, in all holy obedience. Christ appears glorious and lovely not only as a Saviour but as a Lord; and there is now no reluctance or hesitation about receiving him and trusting in him. For a while the convinced and humbled sinner is kept back from closing with the gracious terms of the gospel, by a legal spirit, by a sense of its own unworthiness, and a fear that

if it comes it will not be received. It cannot conceive of that riches and freeness of grace which will welcome the chief of sinners to the house of mercy. A lingering thought of some previous cleansing or preparation; or at least of some deeper conviction, or more tender relentings, prevents a speedy approach to Jesus. But O, when he manifests his love which brought him from a throne to a cross, doubt and unbelief are driven away, and like Thomas, the believing penitent exclaims, MY LORD AND MY GOD.

Where sin is truly repented of, there is always a willingness, and even a desire to confess it. Therefore we read, "That with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth *confession is made unto salvation.*" Our confession should be made chiefly unto God, for him have we offended. "Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil." And the sincere penitent spends much time in humble prostration of soul before God, confessing with brokenness of heart his multiplied and aggravated sins. He is also ready to confess his faults before men, and especially before the church, so far as it is thought to be for the glory of God and edification of the church. And if he has done injustice to individuals, he wishes to confess the wrong, and is anxious to make reparation, and even to do more. "Half my goods," said the converted publican, "I give to the poor, and if I have wronged any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." The prayer of another publican was, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

It must not be passed over, though it would be understood by every experienced reader, that such views as have been described cannot but enkindle a holy flame of love to Christ, and to his cause and people. True faith cannot exist without love—it works by love. The views of faith cause the love of God to be shed abroad in the soul, and a sense of his love enkindles ours. "We love him because he first loved us." GOD IS LOVE. This is the brightest and most amiable aspect of his character; and when that divine excellence is manifested in unparalleled love to us, it cannot but produce a powerful effect in winning the affections, and drawing forth the heart in returns of love to him, "who has loved us and given himself for us." Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends: but God hath manifested his love by giving his only begotten Son to die for us while we were enemies. The cross becomes the great point of attraction to the believer, and the centre of his warmest



affections. From this point radiate the brightest rays of the divine glory. From the cross go forth the most potent influences to conquer the world, and to draw all men to the Saviour. The regenerate man lives by faith upon his crucified Redeemer. Paul's experience is his, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." The new life inspired in regeneration is a life of dependence—of entire dependence on Christ. The love of God in Christ is the animating principle of the new creature. But graces rise not alone, they cluster together, and mutually support and adorn each other. Faith works by love; faith and love united generate hope; for the good which is loved and looked for, is not present but future. And when hope rises to assurance it brings forth joy; and a sense of God's favour, and confidence in his mercy and protection fills the soul with abiding peace; a peace which the world cannot give, but which Christ often breathes into the hearts of his disciples. "My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled nor afraid."

But although true religion consists essentially in right feeling, it does not stop here, but goes forth into outward acts of obedience. Prayer and praise are no longer a task, but a delight. Searching the Scriptures, and meditation on the works and word of God, become the daily employments of the genuine convert; and his progress in divine knowledge is often astonishingly rapid. He thirsts after the knowledge of God, and his prayers for divine illumination are answered by the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, who by degrees leads him into the knowledge of all necessary truth. The occasions of social and public worship are pleasant and refreshing to the renewed man, and the sacred rest and holy exercises of the Christian sabbath are in perfect correspondence with the taste and temper of his mind. He is ready to exclaim, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts, my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord." "One day in thy courts is better than a thousand." A renewed heart is not only a devotional but a benevolent heart. One of the strongest feelings experienced by the person truly converted is a desire for the salvation of others. This expansive desire may begin at home among



his own kindred and friends, but it will go on to enlarge the circle until it has no other limits but the ends of the earth. Every man, however separated by distance or other circumstances, is viewed as a neighbour and a brother, and the desire of happiness for all who are not removed beyond the reach of mercy, becomes a cherished and predominant feeling, and prompts to active exertions as well as fervent prayers in behalf of those who are perishing in unbelief or for lack of knowledge. And the sincere inquiry is made, "Lord what wouldst thou have me to do?" To promote the glory of God and the happiness of men are now the two great ends to which all plans and actions are directed. With cheerful alacrity and steady purpose the regenerated man begins a life of obedience and active usefulness. And as God has connected him with others by various relations, out of which spring an obligation to perform relative duties, he feels this obligation, and endeavours to fill up the circle of prescribed actions with diligence and fidelity. Whatever may be his condition in life, he will find enough to do. As a parent, a husband or wife, a child or brother, a magistrate or private citizen, a teacher or pupil, a master or servant, a friend or stranger, the law of his God is so broad that it reaches his case and embraces every relation of human life, whether natural or artificial. The man who steadily performs these duties, and from day to day, like the sun, goes through his prescribed course, is indeed a regenerated man, for the tree is known by its fruits.

As this world is a place of trial and discipline, the child of God is not only called to act with energy, but to suffer with patience. He who is taught of God learns to be submissive to the divine will, and to bear with fortitude those evils which are incident to pilgrims and strangers in the world. But while the regenerated man experiences those exercises of piety which have been mentioned, he is not free from feelings of a contrary nature. The old man, or the deep-rooted principle of sin, has received a deadly wound in regeneration, but the carnal life lingers, and sometimes struggles with great force to recover the mastery of the soul. Innumerable corruptions are bred in the heart, and often these hidden evils are brought to view by the power of temptation, so that, for a season, "iniquities prevail," and the unwatchful Christian is led captive by his enemies; and if God did not reclaim him from his backsliding, he would be utterly lost. The existence, at the same time, of two opposite

principles in the soul, of necessity produces a conflict. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, so that we cannot do the things that we would." This spiritual conflict is very painful, and the Christian soldier is often astonished at himself, and is led to bewail his own imperfection and inconsistency. He finds his enemies to be much more powerful and obstinate than he expected, when he enlisted under the banner of the cross. He pleased himself then with the prospect of an easy victory, and an almost unresisted progress. Sin appeared to be dead; but the appearance was deceitful, it only lay concealed in the depths of a deceitful heart. And when he finds the strength of his corruptions, and the feebleness of his graces, he is often much discouraged, and greatly fears that he shall one day fall by the hand of some of his numerous enemies. The stability of the covenant of grace, and the faithfulness of God's promises, are not at first fully understood; but gradually the sincere convert learns to live by faith, knowing and feeling that all his strength and comfort are treasured up in Christ. And after many painful contests, and some shameful defeats, he has the pleasure of finding that his enemies give him less disturbance than before, and learns to resist them more successfully, by means of the word, prayer and faith.

From what has been said we may deduce the following summary.

1. Regeneration is the commencement of spiritual life in a soul before dead in sin, by the omnipotent agency of God; and the exercises of this life are specifically different from all the exercises of an unregenerate heart.

2. The strength of the principle of life in the new birth, as in the natural birth, is exceedingly various; for while some are brought into the world of grace in the clear light of day, and are from the first active and vigorous, and enjoy much comfort in their pious exercises; others give very obscure evidence of being in possession of life, and remain long in a state of feebleness. Indeed, some are like those children who seem at birth to be dead, but afterwards revive, and by degrees acquire vigour and maturity. But it by no means is a uniform fact, that the children who are most healthy and vigorous at birth, continue to be so throughout life. Disease or other disasters may check their growth, and debilitate their constitution; while those who commence life in extreme weakness may acquire strength, and grow prosperously from year to year; so that, in mature age, they may have greatly

surpassed many who were much more healthy and vigorous in the earliest stage of existence. Analogous to this are the facts observable in the spiritual life.

3. While some may experience this change so remarkably that they never can doubt of its reality, and can refer to the very day when they emerged from darkness to life, others, who nevertheless are truly regenerated, remain long in doubt about their spiritual state; and even when the evidence of their conversion becomes satisfactory, they are utterly unable to fix the precise time when they began to live. And it is probable that many who speak with confidence of the time and place of their new birth, mistake entirely respecting this point: the time to which they refer the commencement of their spiritual life, is more probably the season of some clear manifestation of the divine favour, when darkness and sorrow were succeeded by joy and peace; and yet the principle of life may have existed long before. There is good reason to think that the exercises of a soul under conviction are often those of the sincere penitent.

4. Spiritual life is progressive in its nature. Habitual growth in grace is the best evidence of its reality. Those affections and joys which are temporary, however high they may rise, are not the exercises of the new creature. Under the influence of a strong love of happiness and dread of misery, and the convictions of an awakened conscience, many are greatly concerned about their salvation, and are induced to attend diligently and earnestly on the means of grace, and often are deeply impressed and shed many tears; and from some latent principle in the human constitution an oppressive burden of misery may suddenly be succeeded by a feeling of pleasure and lightness, accompanied by the persuasion that sin is pardoned and God appeased. This change of feeling may have its origin merely in the animal frame or nervous system, and may be illustrated by the effects produced by physical causes, such as opiates, carminatives, nitrous-oxide, &c. Or these sudden joys may originate in some suggestion to the mind, as that our sins are pardoned, or that God loves us, and the delusion is more complete if this sudden suggestion comes clothed in the language of Scripture, as Son or daughter "thy sins are forgiven thee." These false conversions soon die away, and like the seed on stony ground, bring no fruit to maturity. But genuine piety is a growing principle, and proves that it has deep root by its regular advance-

ment towards perfection. This gradual progress in piety is beautifully represented by our Lord under the figure of seed vegetating and going on to maturity. "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear; after that the full corn in the ear." Growth in piety resembles the growth of the human body from childhood to manhood. No progress is visible from one day to another, but in months and years the increase is manifest. And as the body, while rising to maturity, may for a season be retarded or thrown back by disease, so also the health of the soul is sometimes deeply impaired, and the exercises of piety in such a state of declension, become extremely feeble. But from these diseases the Great Physician knows how to recover the souls which he has redeemed.

5. Genuine piety is a permanent and undying principle, and thus it may be distinguished from transient impressions, however powerful; yet we should not suppose that the exercises of the real Christian are uniform, or that all experience equal fluctuations of feeling. We cannot ascertain, much less describe, all the causes which may singly, or in combination, give complexion to the frames and exercises of a child of God; nor can we determine, in many cases, why one believer enjoys so much more tranquillity and cheerful hope than another, who may be equally sincere, and equally fervent in spirit.

A melancholy temperament, or a disposition to anticipate the worst in all matters, and to contemplate the dark side of the picture, has doubtless a great effect in modifying the exercises of many pious people. They are naturally gloomy and desponding, and they bring this temper with them into religion. They are always full of doubts and fears, and though they do really possess the characteristics of piety, they will not be encouraged to hope with confidence. They hang their heads daily like the bulrush, and are of a sorrowful spirit, and refuse to be comforted. On the other hand, persons of a sanguine temperament, as in other things, so in religion, are disposed to view every thing in the most favourable light; and although their evidences may really be no clearer than his who is forever in doubt and distress; yet they cherish a favourable opinion of their spiritual state.



That, however, which we wish to inculcate is, that true piety is an abiding principle, which, however the feelings may fluctuate, never becomes extinct.

6. One of the certain effects of divine illumination is an increasing knowledge of the sinfulness of our own hearts. These views of inbred corruption are indeed most appalling and discouraging; they are also unexpected; but they are among the most salutary with which we are favoured; and they furnish the best evidence of the genuineness of a work of grace. Hypocrites may talk much of the wickedness of their hearts, and even exceed all bounds in the accusations which they bring against themselves; but their words are like the parrot's, without meaning; they would be offended if any one believed only a small part of their self-accusations. Their object is not to be thought corrupt and sinful, but humble and holy. True humility, however, arises out of this knowledge of our own hearts, and is proportioned to the degree of self-knowledge which we possess. These spiritual views also cut up by the root self-righteousness and self-dependence. The man who knows the corruption of his own heart, and the secret defects of his holiest emotions and best affections, will never be disposed to place the least dependence on his own works. This knowledge also stirs him up to prayer, by showing him his urgent necessities.

7. The truly regenerated man hates, opposes, and endeavours to extirpate all sin. He can say with David "I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way." Although on certain occasions sinful propensities may gain a temporary dominion, and he may fall, like Noah, David, and Peter, into grievous transgressions; yet is not a sinful life the choice of his heart, nor is it his purpose to indulge in sin: and when overcome by its power, like an elastic body bent out of its usual position, he quickly returns to his habitual state of feeling and acting. He soon finds the pleasures of sin turned into wormwood and gall; he weeps like Peter when he reflects upon his shameful ingratitude; and like David in the 51st Psalm, he makes penitent confession of his sin, and earnestly prays for pardon, cleansing, the restoration of divine favour and spiritual joy. These falls are like broken bones or dislocated joints; they are apt to give pain in the retrospect as long as life endures; but God over-rules even our faults sometimes for our good, by making them the occasion of teaching us more thoroughly our own weakness and the depth of our corruption, and by



rendering us more watchful and more sensible of our dependence on divine aid for continuance in a state of grace.

8. As the word of God furnishes both the motive and the object of all spiritual affections, it cannot but be very dear to the renewed heart, especially as it reveals Christ in all his offices as the Redeemer of his people. As naturally and instinctively as the new born babe thirsts after that nutriment which flows from the mother's breast, so the young child of grace desires the sincere or unadulterated milk of the word, that it may grow thereby. "O how I love thy holy law" is the language of his heart. His estimation of the word is above all the most precious treasures of earth. "More to be desired than gold, yea than much fine gold." And pleasant as well as precious. "Sweeter also than honey or the honey comb." Therefore, "he delights in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night." A lively relish for divine truth, and a cordial approbation of all God's word is one mark of renovation of heart. Every true convert is a student of the Bible, a disciple at the feet of Jesus whom alone he acknowledges to be an infallible Teacher. The longer he lives the more highly does he appreciate the sacred Scriptures and he finds in them a well spring of life, a never failing source of consolation.

9. A regenerated man loves the people of God. "Hereby," says the apostle John, "we know that we are passed from death to life because we love the brethren." This, in the religion of Christ, is considered to be a principle of vital importance. Our Lord himself inculcated no duty more frequently or more urgently. This he calls "a new commandment;" and, indeed, makes it the badge by which his disciples should be known by the world. "Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples by the love which ye have for one another." The apostles also, in their writings, exhibited the obligation of Christians to exercise this holy affection, with great clearness and frequency. Brotherly love, when genuine, is excited by the consideration that Christians are the redeemed, adopted, and acknowledged brethren of their Lord. They are loved for the Master's sake. And again, they are loved because they bear the image of Christ. Love to the brethren is a vital branch springing out of the root of love to God himself. "Every one that loveth him that begeth, loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and keep his commandments."

10. A soul that is born of God ardently and habitually desires to glorify God by all practicable means. This is the highest end, as it is the daily end of all the real children of God. They do not wish to live for themselves, but for him who gave himself for them. They endeavour to ascertain, from a consideration of their own talents and circumstances, and from the aspects of Providence, in what occupation, station, or profession, they can serve God most effectually. And they gladly seize opportunities of advancing the interests of Christ's kingdom. Their faculties, their learning, their influence, power, and property, are all consecrated to God; and they consider themselves as stewards of these several talents, which they are under the most sacred obligations to improve for his advantage. This aim is not confined to actions comparatively important, but is extended to all the common concerns of this life. In eating, drinking, ploughing, sowing, and in whatever they do, they study to glorify God. He who is born of God has his mind directed to God. He sets his affections on things above, and not on things on the earth.

11. A regenerated man has his will swallowed up in the will of God. "Thy will be done," is his daily prayer from his inmost soul. This acquiescence in the divine will is complete just so far as his heart is renewed, and every feeling of discontent, reluctance, or opposition which he feels, in relation to God's administration, he condemns as sinful rebellion. When called to suffer, he bears the rod with filial submission, and though he may beg to be released from the pressure of heavy affliction, yet he asks this in submission to the will of God. If these chastisements, however grievous, can be for the glory of God, or so sanctified to him as to promote his faith and patience, he is willing to endure them, and even to have them increased. True piety never appears more genuine, and never more attractive, than when the people of God are suffering in deep affliction. Trials are to grace what the furnace is to metals: they prove its genuineness, and purify it from its dross. Believers cannot know their own sincerity, nor the strength of their own faith, until they are tried.

12. The only other effect of regeneration which we shall mention is a grateful sense of the love and goodness of God. Gratitude is the soul of heart-religion. Unregenerate men may and often do experience a sensation of natural gratitude; and on some occasions it may come upon them with a gush

of feeling. Such emotions are amiable and salutary, but they are transient, and involve no perception of the moral excellence of God. But the renewed man cherishes this lively sense of God's goodness continually. It is the most frequent emotion of his heart, and has the most powerful and practical influence upon his life. He is *constrained* by the love of Christ who died for him. He sees in the manifestation of that love, moral excellence beyond expression. It is the brightest point in his horizon. And the more he contemplates this glory, the more is he fired with the love of gratitude. His only wish to live, is for CHRIST; his strongest motive for wishing to depart, is *to be with* CHRIST. Heaven appears infinitely desirable because there, an eternity will be spent in praising the Redeemer.

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*Samuel Miller*

- ART. II.—1. *Thoughts on Evangelizing the World.* By Thomas H. Skinner. New York: John S. Taylor. 12mo. pp. 98. 1836.
2. *Catholic Communion, in the present state of the Christian Church, inconsistent with a due regard for Truth: a Lecture, delivered before the Students of the Theological Seminary of the Associate Reformed Synod of the West, February 11th, 1836.* By John T. Pressly, D.D. Pittsburgh: 8vo. pp. 15. 1836.

*Ne quid nimis* is a good practical maxim, no less in theology than in morals, in literature, and in domestic economy. Extremes are seldom either wise or safe. Of this we have a striking example in the Discourses, the titles of which stand at the head of this article. The first is a specimen of anti-sectarianism run mad; the second of the "high-pressure" principle on the opposite side. We can agree with neither. We regret to announce such publications in the nineteenth century. They both argue a morbid state of the public mind in regard to the great subject of which they treat.

Under the title of "Thoughts on Evangelizing the world," Dr. Skinner has published a Sermon which he preached at the opening of the Mercer Street Presbyterian Church in the city of New York, of which he had taken the pastoral charge. He has delivered the substance of it in a number of pulpits, and on a variety of occasions, with a frequency and

a zeal which evince that it is a favourite subject with him, or rather that it absorbs his mind. And we are the rather disposed to take some extended notice of this sermon, small as it is both in size and value, because, if we are not deceived, its crudities are beginning to find advocates in men who ought to know better, and who have some influence in the church.

We have seldom seen a more singular compound of pious eloquence, and of visionary enthusiasm, than this sermon exhibits. Much that the author says is sound, weighty and indisputable; but what may be called the leading doctrine of the whole discourse strikes us as evincing a most extraordinary lack of practical wisdom, as well as a lamentable departure from the spirit as well as the letter of the Bible.

After a short Preface, in which the author's favourite illusion makes the most prominent figure, he proceeds to deduce from his text (Psalm 67: 1, 2.) the following propositions:

*That Christians should seek to propagat substantial Christianity, rather than any sectarian form of it.*

*That they should lay their plans of evangelism, so as to admit the coalition of all Christians.*

*That they should so conduct their proceedings as to evade, as far as possible, opposition from the world.*

*That, nevertheless, the utmost zeal and resolution are indispensable to carry the work forward. But after all,*

*That they should depend for success, not on their own exertions, however unexceptionable, but on the co-operation of the divine power.*

To illustrate and establish the FIRST of the foregoing propositions, is, evidently, Dr. Skinner's main purpose. And that we may not misrepresent what he means by this proposition, we shall state that meaning in his own words.

"Among the various sects of true\* Christians, there are of course peculiarities which distinguish and unhappily divide them from one another; and there is also a *common faith*, which distinguishes them all from the world, but which indissolubly unites them to one another and to the great family of God in heaven and on earth. Their common faith is *substantial*, and their party peculi-

\* "As all were not Israel who were of Israel, so all are not Christians who have assumed the Christian name. I speak not of nominal but real Christians. My object does not require me to specify the points in which the latter are always distinguished from the former. That there are such points is certain; and it is also certain, in my own belief, that these points relate to doctrine, as well as spirit and conduct. I assume that these points are known, and that those only are admitted to be true Christians who are not radically delinquent in respect to them. I speak exclusively of those who are *admitted to be* the true followers and friends of Christ."



arities are *sectarian* Christianity. My position is, that in their efforts to spread the Gospel among mankind, Christians should seek to propagate, not the latter but the former, their common faith, not their sectarian peculiarities,—what they agree, not what they differ in,—what unites, not what divides them. To be, if possible, yet more explicit, I mean to say, and shall attempt to prove, that their object should be to propagate not both what they agree and what they differ in; but what they agree in exclusively of what they differ in.\* I am aware that there are those who may consider this a startling paradox, and I should not advance it but from the most imperative sense both of its truth, and of the infinite importance of its being practically acknowledged as truth. The following are the grounds of this conviction."

Dr. S. having thus stated what he means by this proposition, proceeds to confirm it by arguments such as these:

1. "Importance belongs to what Christians agree in, comparative nothingness to what divides them into sects."

2. It is plain that we should not seek to propagate sectarianism among mankind, *because there ought to be none among ourselves.*

3. His third and last argument is, *that the world cannot be evangelized by the propagation of sectarianism.*

But what is "Sectarianism"? Every thing here depends of course on the meaning which Dr. Skinner attaches to this term. If it were possible to consider him as intending to express by it that spirit of narrow prejudice and bigotry, which is wholly absorbed in the peculiarities of one's own denomination; which can see no good without and no evil within its own pale,—every candid reader would without hesitation, join with him in condemning it. This is, indeed, a hateful spirit, which none ought to indulge, and which can never promote any good cause. But this is evidently, not the import of the term "Sectarianism" as employed by Dr. Skinner. It is true, indeed in the course of his glowing description he sometimes attaches ideas of this sort to the term. But such is not with him, its primary mea-

\* "It were well, I think, if even ordinary discourses from the pulpit were restricted to these undisputed points. These points are sufficiently numerous and comprehensive to engross all the time and strength of preachers, and it is doubtful if there is a promiscuous congregation on earth that are not liable to be more injured than profited by polemical sermons. To what does the most *laborious* indoctrination of the common people in polemical divinity generally amount? But have I not used an improper epithet? It is not controversial preaching that demands labour, but the practical enforcement of the great fundamentals of the gospel! Is not this among the reasons why controversy in the pulpit is so common? If a preacher wishes to make what most of his hearers will think an able discourse, at little expense of either time or thought, let him take, as his theme, not some common-place topic of morals, or some article of the common faith, but a subject which will allow him to raise and resolve sectarian questions at pleasurc."



ning. If we understand him, he would stigmatize with this odious title, all disposition on the part of any denomination of Christians to maintain or to propagate any of those *peculiarities*, either of *doctrine* or *order*, which distinguish Christian denominations from each other. He tells us that such peculiarities are never important; that "comparative nothingness" belongs to them; that they ought not to exist among ourselves; and that pleading for them can never contribute any thing toward the spread of the Gospel through the world. This is wonderful doctrine! Our objections to it are insurmountable. And unless we are deceived, it is unspeakably absurd.

Our *first* objection is to the allegation, that none of these peculiarities are of any importance in themselves, and ought not to be held by those who receive them. Any of what peculiarities? *Any whatever of those which exist among real Christians of different denominations.* It cannot reasonably be doubted that there are truly pious people among *Arminians*, who reject every peculiar article of Calvinistic belief; among *Baptists*, who repudiate infant membership and baptism; among *Episcopalians*, who contend for the indispensable necessity of Prelates and Liturgies, and will not allow that to be a church of Christ at all, or him to be a commissioned minister where Episcopacy is wanting; among *Quakers*, who reject an ordained ministry, and outward sacraments altogether, and who allow females, as well as those of the other sex, to speak in their public Assemblies: and among *Independents*, who regard clerical ordinations as unnecessary, and even unscriptural, and consider every member of the Church as vested with equal power in its government, and in every ecclesiastical act. Now, the assumption of Dr. Skinner, if we comprehend his argument, is that there is *no importance* belonging to any of these peculiarities, but "comparative nothingness." That is, whether we teach the people Calvinism or Arminianism in doctrine; whether we treat our beloved children as members of the body of Christ and mark them with the sacramental seal which Christ has appointed, or consider them as being as much without the bond of the Christian covenant as the children of Mohamedans or Pagans; whether we receive the sacraments of Christ's house, or reject them, as carnal observances; whether we regard the gospel ministry as an ordinance of Christ, and regulate and treat it accordingly, or abandon it to the caprice of individual or popular will;—are all unimportant matters;

—are all comparatively nothing. Can this be so? Would Dr. Skinner be willing distinctly and deliberately to pronounce such a judgment? We cannot help believing that he would shrink from it, when thus plainly stated, with instinctive horror.

But there is a *second* consideration which appears to us of still more serious import. We suppose no one will hesitate to admit, that a certain system of truth, in regard to the way of salvation is revealed, and certain specific ordinances enjoined in holy Scripture, which all the people of God are bound to receive with reverence and submission. We do not doubt, indeed, that real Christians *may* mistake, and *have actually* fallen into mistake concerning both the doctrines and the ordinances thus revealed. That, however, is not the question. But a very serious question is this:—If a minister of the gospel does really and honestly believe that the word of God teaches that system of doctrine which we denominate Calvinism, is he at liberty, in discharging his ministry, either at home or abroad, to withhold it from the people, and instead of it either to teach a system of error, or, for fear of giving offence, to keep back an important portion of truth from those to whom he professes to bear the gospel message, and to frame a more smooth and accommodating gospel in its place?

We are solemnly commanded, in the word of God, to “buy the truth and not sell it;” to be well established in the truth; to *contend earnestly* for the faith once delivered to the saints; and carefully to guard against being “carried about by every wind of doctrine.” “Hold fast,” says one apostle, “the form of sound words which thou hast received.” “Whosoever,” says another apostle, “abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God.” And again, “If there come any unto you, and bring not *this doctrine*, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is a partaker of his evil deeds.” Nay, departure from “sound doctrine,” is every where represented as the seed of all corruption. We are further taught, in many passages of Scripture, that the *sanctification* of men is effected by the instrumentality of the *truth*; and the whole tenour of the word of God testifies that the recovery of sinful men from the ruins of the fall is effected by the instrumentality of the truth applied with power and love by the Holy Spirit. And as these are the declarations and injunctions of Scripture with regard to the strict maintenance of

*doctrinal truth*, so the same inspired oracles are equally explicit and solemn in enjoining a sacred regard to all the instituted *ordinances* of Christ. This is included in the original commission. "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to *observe all things* whatsoever I have commanded you." And the inspired Paul, in conformity with this injunction, said to the believing Corinthians: "Now I praise you, brethren, that you *keep the ordinances as I delivered them unto you.*" Accordingly it seems to be agreed by sober-minded Christians, of all denominations, that the church was founded, not merely to promote the comfort and moral improvement of her members; but also that she might be at once a depository and a witness of the truth in the midst of an ungodly world; that she might propagate it among those who have it not; and that, in pursuance of this great purpose of her organization, it is incumbent on her, from age to age, to resist all the encroachments of error; to bear a decided and constant testimony in favour of all the peculiar and most precious doctrines of the Gospel; and to maintain, in their simplicity and purity, all the institutions of Christ. If such be the design and the duty of the church, in her organized capacity, as well as of all her members, and especially of all her leaders and guides, how, we ask, is all this to be reconciled with the doctrine of the sermon before us? They cannot be reconciled. Every sentence that Dr. S. urges in support of his first proposition, is directly opposed to the spirit and letter of the Bible. His whole scheme necessarily involves compromising the truth; keeping back the truth; or so modifying the truth as to make it palatable to those who cannot receive it in its simplicity and fulness. The same may be said of gospel ordinances. The word of God enjoins the maintenance of them in their original purity; but if the chimera of our author were in any measure realized, they could not be maintained a day. Only suppose his plan to be really carried into execution, and what would become of the truth and order which Christ has given to his church, and of which that church is solemnly charged to be a faithful guardian? They would be in a little while scattered to the winds; and of course, one great end of the church's institution would be completely frustrated. Only let those, whose office it is to preach the gospel, and who are set as "watchmen" on the walls of Zion—only let them adopt that temporizing plan of preaching

which shall convey no clear, decided system of doctrine; which shall not go counter, in any point, to the general plan of statement in which all real Christians can agree; and which shall not inculcate any rite or ordinance in which all pious persons do not entirely coincide; and we beg to ask the advocate of this plan, what would become of that precious system of truth and order which our Master in heaven has, at so great a price, bequeathed to his people?

It was precisely by this means, aided by others, that Unitarianism crept into Boston, and afterwards into other parts of Massachusetts. The ministers of that city, many years ago, established the habit of exchanging pulpits with each other in the forenoon of every sabbath; and as some diversities of theological opinion were known, even at that early period, to exist among them, it was considered as a matter of fraternal decorum, in these exchanges, not to drop any sentiment or opinion known to militate with the opinions taught by the pastor of the church in which each minister, for the time being, found himself. The consequence was, that a general, accommodating, and smooth mode of preaching which left out of view the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, and advanced nothing which could give pain to any denomination, gradually became the prevailing mode. Of course, in a little while, the gospel in its simplicity and undisguised purity ceased to be preached; the people gradually lost sight of sound doctrine; from this the transition was easy to an entire disrelish for it, when occasionally preached by transient visitors; the way was opened for all manner of lax and corrupt opinions; and before long the Pelagian, and, eventually, the Unitarian heresy obtained a lamentable prevalence in a city once the strong hold of sound principles.

Now the doctrine of the sermon before us, if we understand it, were it adopted and acted upon, would, we are persuaded, be productive of the same deplorable results. Let the Calvinistic preacher determine to deliver nothing from the pulpit but what all real Christians agree in receiving; and he will, in a little while, have preached all clear, intelligent, discriminating, doctrinal belief out of his church; and will have prepared his hearers for any and every error that an ingenious and insinuating heretic may think proper to recommend. Can a system which is adapted to produce such an effect be in accordance with Scripture? It is impossible. In a word, taking the Bible in our hands, let us ask, What is *substantial Christianity*? How much of it may we take



away, and yet leave THE SUBSTANCE; so much of it as may be necessary to salvation? How many of the doctrines which its divine Author has revealed, may be given up, or concealed, and yet enough be left for all the great purposes of practical religion? Is this a question easily decided? Would all real Christians be apt to decide it alike? Would not the decision of it according to the conscientious convictions of each individual Christian or church, lead to the multiplication of sects rather than their extinction?

A *third* argument against the leading doctrine of this sermon, is no less conclusive. It is an *impracticable* system. The moment it is brought to the test of *experiment*, its visionary character is disclosed. Keeping in view the position, that nothing is to be presented to the people, by him who goes forth to propagate the gospel, but that in which all Christians are agreed, how shall the missionary, either at home or abroad, proceed? He cannot preach either Calvinism or Arminianism, or any other theological system; for in no one of these forms of doctrinal belief are all real Christians agreed. What, then, is he to preach? Nor is this the whole of his difficulty. Suppose, by his non-descript preaching, he should be made the means of winning souls to the kingdom of Christ, and they should apply to be received into the visible church, and to partake of its privileges; what could he do? He must not, according to Dr. Skinner's theory, organize his church on the Independent, the Presbyterian, or the Episcopal plan; for in no one of these, are all Christians agreed. He must not baptize the *children* of his church; for in this, his Baptist brethren would differ from him; nor must he postpone their baptism until the arrival of *adult age*; for in this, Pedobaptists would find fault with him. How, then, or when, shall he administer this seal of the covenant at all? And so in regard to *ordination*. He must omit it altogether; for he cannot perform it by the whole body of the brotherhood, with Independents; nor by prelates with Episcopalians; nor, according to the Scriptures, by the laying on of the hands of Presbyters with Presbyterians; for all these are matters of controversy. In short, how shall such a missionary form a church at all? How shall he govern it? How shall he conduct its instruction? How shall he maintain its discipline? We should be curious to see how Dr. S. would embody his "SUBSTANTIAL CHRISTIANITY," as he is pleased to call it; how he would congregate his converts; how he would pursue measures that had any

countenance from the word of God, or from the example of his church, for their instruction and edification. This is no caricature. It is the manifest and inevitable result of the principle here maintained. For ourselves we see not how it is possible to avoid consequences which, the moment they are presented, expose the whole scheme, as not only unwise, but completely absurd; as not merely impracticable, but we must say, with respect, superlatively ridiculous. It is a vision which may, for a time, warm a pious and generous heart; but cannot, we are persuaded, long satisfy a sober, reflecting mind.

A *fourth* consideration, and the last that we shall mention, satisfies us that the plan of Dr. Skinner ought to find no countenance with the enlightened friends of truth and piety. A better method could not possibly be devised to favour the plans of proselyting errorists, and to enfeeble, and ultimately prostrate the fairest and best portions of the church of God. For example, when Presbyterian ministers come forward and tell their hearers, that all the peculiarities, whether of doctrine or order, which distinguish their denomination, and for which their fathers "contended earnestly," are of no importance; that they ought no longer to have any place in their affections; and in their efforts to extend the Redeemer's kingdom, ought to be wholly disregarded:—what will be the natural consequence? Why, undoubtedly, that their hearers will be ready, without a scruple, to abandon the church of their fathers, and to join any sect into which a plausible and empty declaimer may endeavour to draw them. There is a tendency in depraved human nature to embrace error, in preference to truth. So that even when men are ever so carefully instructed in the doctrine and order of the church, they are prone enough to "turn aside to fables." But what can be expected, when the details of a sound creed are not so much as communicated; nay, when men are expressly taught that the peculiarities of orthodoxy are of no importance; that they are not worth contending for; and that he who forsakes them, and throws himself into the arms of a different and erroneous system, is just as advantageously situated as if he faithfully adhered to them all.

The truth is, the most bigoted denominations around us, and those who have drunk most deeply into the spirit of proselytism, are delighted to hear such doctrine preached. They insidiously applaud, and recommend it without reserve, because they know that it will render those who re-

ceive it, a much more easy prey to their proselyting arts. If we wished our own church to be scattered to the winds in the most quiet and speedy manner possible, we should begin our process for effecting the object by telling those who now adhere to it, that our peculiarities are of no importance whatever; and that with whatever body of people they found serious piety, they would be as well off, in every practical respect, as in connection with our ministry and discipline. If we know our own hearts, we do not utter these sentiments in that spirit of sectarian bigotry which we abhor and repudiate. But because we believe that truth is truth; because we know that charity, while it "thinketh no evil," yet has eyes and ears, and has not divested itself of all discrimination;—and because we cannot see it to be our duty to sanction a principle which is adapted to weaken and destroy the church, and all for the sake of a mere ideal advantage.

We are as ready as our author to condemn a sectarian spirit, and to deplore the evils of the division and strife which grow out of that spirit. We can cordially unite with him in lamenting "that Christendom is split into contending divisions and parties;" in lamenting, "the bitter animosities, the reciprocal exclusions and anathemas, the altars against altars, the preaching against preaching, the systems against systems," which the visible church exhibits. We grieve no less than he to witness "how the different sects have always been crossing and checking and neutralizing one another, and how, in consequence, Christendom itself has been an almost perpetual desolation, and is so at the present day." This is, indeed, a melancholy picture, and not more melancholy than true. But where is the remedy to be found? Not, surely, in indifference to truth; not in abandoning the landmarks which God's word has set up, and which our fathers have maintained; not in teaching the people, in the face of the Scriptures, no longer to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints;"—for all history informs us that no portions of the nominally Christian world have ever been found so bigoted, intolerant and persecuting, as those which have been most abandoned to degrading superstition, or most distinguished for a latitudinarian spirit. We know of no effectual remedy for narrow, prejudiced, intolerant sectarianism, but that charity which looks to the kingdom and glory of Christ as its chief good; that enlightened zeal for his truth and honour, and for the salvation of souls, which delights to contemplate his image, wherever it is found; and which de-

sires to maintain, in all its simplicity and purity whatever the Master has revealed in his word.

As we understand Dr. Skinner's leading doctrine, then, we cannot, as cordial friends to the speedy conversion of the world to God, give it our approbation. Instead of saying, with him, that "the gospel cannot be propagated" without adopting his principle, we should say *directly the reverse*. The gospel cannot be successfully propagated upon this plan. We think it one of those vain illusions which to exhibit is to refute. And we have no doubt that whoever attempts to carry the plan into execution, will find that, instead of extending the genuine cause of the Redeemer, he is propagating a lax and spurious Christianity, and paving the way for the most deplorable moral desolation. If Dr. S., instead of devoting his attractive talents, and his fervid eloquence to the illusive vision which he has suffered to fill his mind, would employ all his powers in the simple and faithful preaching of the *whole gospel*, without lopping off or modifying any of its doctrines to suit other denominations; if he would charge himself to present to his fellow men, for their benefit, every part of the truth and order of the religion of Christ, just as it is exhibited in the Bible, without addition or subtraction, and at the same time with a spirit of respect and kindness towards those who take other views of religious truth; he would do far more in a few years, to put down bigotry, and real sectarianism in the church of God, than he can possibly do, upon his present plan, by the protracted and zealous labours of half a century. The dream which bears away the mind of our author is not a new one. It has occupied and actuated many minds long ago; and passed away, like other dreams, without any other effect than disappointing the hopes of the dreamers, and sometimes increasing the sectarianism which it sought to extinguish.

It is not denied that sects and parties *ought* to be banished from the church. It is impossible to doubt that, as the visible church is one, having one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one hope, she ought to be one in name, in feeling, and in affectionate acknowledgment. It is plain, then, that all sectarianism implies error and sin somewhere, and, of course, ought to have no existence. But the great practical question is, how shall its continued existence be prevented? By persuading the errorists to abandon their error, and to fall in with truth? This Dr. Skinner would, no doubt, like, if he could have it so. But he makes no such proposal. His only



plan is, that those who occupy scriptural ground, should yield, or, at any rate, forbear to urge, a portion of their Master's truth, for the sake of securing currency for the remainder, and coalescing with the advocates of error. We cannot agree to the wisdom or policy of this. We would rather maintain the whole truth in love; and propagate it, without deduction or adulteration; taking care to treat all who appear to be Christians with respect and affection; to unite with them in doing good, as far as possible, without the compromise of principle; to guard against every feeling or practice inconsistent with the communion of saints; and, in the exercise of the spirit of charity, to wait for the arrival of that period when all the disciples of Christ shall "see eye to eye," and feel and act as "one body in Him, and every one members one of another." In a word, we believe that sectarianism will perish, not by different ecclesiastical bodies coming together in such a spirit of accommodation as will compromise important truth; but by all denominations being brought to unite in the same harmonious system.

For our part; when we hear any thing like the genuine gospel of Christ preached by other denominations; and when we receive intelligence of the apparent triumphs of that gospel in the conversion of souls, under the ministry of those who bear a different name from ourselves, with the inspired Paul, "we rejoice, yea and will rejoice." We have not a feeling that would confine the church or salvation within our own pale: nor do we know a Presbyterian in our land who is disposed to take such sectarian ground. If we are not deceived, there is no denomination of Christians in the United States, nay on earth, who are so ready as the mass of American Presbyterians to unite in communion and in benevolent effort, with all evangelical sects. But when we preach the gospel within our own pale, or go forth to proclaim it among those who have it not, we feel bound to present the pure, unadulterated gospel, in all respects, just as we find it in the word of God; to do this, not, indeed, in the polemical spirit, but in the spirit of kindness and love; endeavouring to establish men in the truth, and "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded them." And we cannot, for a moment, doubt that this is a more effectual way ultimately to put down the *spirit of sect*, in the anti-scriptural sense of that term, than any of those temporizing methods which would keep back or conceal any portion of what God has revealed, for the sake of persuading

men to receive a part instead of the whole. *We* do not call this "sectarianism." We call it, simply, fidelity to our Master in heaven; and cannot help considering the contrary, as undertaking to be "wiser than God." There is a wide difference between loving all Christian denominations who appear to hold the Head, and manifest a Christian spirit;—admitting them to occasional communion with us, as well as occasionally communing with them; and uniting with them in Christian effort for the benefit of mankind, as far as can be done without the abandonment of principle;—there is a wide difference between this,—which is ever our duty,—and undertaking to decide how much or how little of God's truth may be sacrificed in a compromise with error.

We have dwelt the longer on Dr. Skinner's Sermon, because of the respectability and popularity of the author, and because of its plausible, fervid and captivating character. We now turn to the Lecture of Dr. Pressly, which will be found a rare example of exclusiveness, "after the strictest sect."

One would think, at this period of the world's age and experience, that two bodies of Presbyterians, having precisely the same Confession of Faith, precisely the same form of government and discipline, and a form of worship exactly agreeing in all respects, save only a difference in the version of Psalms which they employ—might freely commune together without any unhallowed mixture, or any criminal abandonment of principle on either side. But to this Dr. Pressly can by no means accede. He seems to be scandalized at the thought of intercommunion between the members of the Presbyterian church in the United States, under the care of the General Assembly, and those of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian church. He thinks he sees in such intercommunion a departure from principle, and an endangering of the purity and safety of his denomination, which ought by no means to be allowed. And occupying, as he does, the important station of Professor in the Theological Seminary of the Associate Reformed Synod of the West, he thought proper to raise his warning voice against any such ecclesiastical intercourse.

The following extract from the close of his Lecture will enable our readers to judge of its general design and spirit.

"The doctrine of our standards, then, may be briefly exhibited in the following words. The constitution of the Associate Reformed church, contains our testimony for the truth in relation to doctrine, worship, government, and disci-

pline. Here are the terms on which we have associated together as a religious community under the authority of the Lord Jesus. If any one desires to enjoy organic communion with us, in the service of our common Lord, here are the terms of admission into our community. This testimony we consider ourselves obligated to bear to the truth of our Lord and Master. If you agree with us in this testimony, we shall be happy in the enjoyment of communion with you. But if you will not unite with us in embracing this system of faith, we may not be unfaithful to our King, by laying down our testimony and receiving you into fellowship with us.

“And that this is the doctrine of our standards, is evident from the practice of the framers of our constitution from the first. They, it must be supposed, understood their own constitution, as well as any who have come after them. That the uniform practice of our church from the beginning, was decidedly opposed to catholic communion, is manifest from her whole history, and particularly from the universal excitement from one extremity of the church to the other, which was produced by the conduct of the brethren, Mason, Matthews, and Clarke, who in the year 1811 engaged in communion with the Presbyterian church. At the first meeting of General Synod after this occurrence took place, these brethren were called to account for this innovation in the practice of the Associate Reformed church. Dr. Mason at this time, did not undertake to defend his conduct upon the principle that catholic communion was the doctrine either of the Bible or of our standards, but pleaded in his own behalf *the peculiar circumstances* in which he and his congregation were placed. The peculiarity of his circumstances will appear from the following historical facts.

“The congregation under the care of Dr. Mason being destitute of a house of worship, obtained permission to occupy temporarily the house belonging to the congregation of Dr. Romeyn, of the Presbyterian church in the city of New York. This circumstance introduced the two societies into the most intimate acquaintance, occasioned each frequently to wait on the ministrations of the pastor of the other; the consequence of which was, a high degree of mutual affection, confidence, and esteem. Upon the first occasion on which Dr. Mason administered the Lord’s supper to his congregation, it was thought proper to admit Dr. Romeyn and the people of his charge to communion. And when Dr. Romeyn administered the Lord’s supper, an invitation was given to Dr. Mason’s congregation, which was accepted. But, says Dr. Mason, in his communication to General Synod, this intercommunion is not considered as involving the question of communion, with any other church than that one with which I and my people were so peculiarly connected; nor is it contemplated to continue after we shall have obtained a separate place for worship.\* From this statement it does not appear that the idea of catholic communion had at this time entered into Dr. Mason’s mind. The peculiarity of the circumstances in which he was placed was the ground on which he vindicated his departure from what had been the uniform practice of our church. He did not pretend that intercommunion under ordinary circumstances was proper. Nor was it then his intention, that the intercommunion which had taken place between his congregation and that of Dr. Romeyn should continue, after their peculiar connection should cease to exist. It is therefore evident, that even Dr. Mason himself did not at this time, suppose that the doctrine of catholic communion was taught by the standards of the Associate Reformed church. But some time after this a principle of interpretation was discovered, by which the constitution of our church was made to yield its support to catholic communion. And if men may be allowed to frame their own principles of interpretation, the Bible may be made to support Unitarianism. The thirty-nine articles of the Church of England, (a formula of faith, just about as Calvinistic as Calvin’s Institutes,) can

\* See Minutes of General Synod for 1811.

be interpreted so as to accord with the tenets of Arminius. In the light of the nineteenth century, we have seen theologians gravely undertake to interpret the Westminster Confession of Faith, so as to make it chime with the sentiments of Pelagius. And detached expressions in our standards may be laid hold of, and may be made to yield a plausible support to the doctrine of catholic communion. But the judicial acts of the Associate Reformed church, and her uniform practice from her origin, prove conclusively, that catholic communion has no place in that system of faith which she has embraced, as taught in the sacred Scriptures."

We acknowledge that we have read these passages with surprise and regret. It is not our purpose at present to enter into the argument with Dr. Pressly; but simply to bear our testimony against a system of exclusiveness so rigorous and extreme. We are not prepared, indeed, to subscribe to every "part and parcel" of Dr. Mason's eloquent and able work on "Catholic Communion." To some of the principles which he lays down we are constrained to demur, as too indefinite, and of questionable safety: but we hardly expected to find a pupil of that great man, and especially one of so much intelligence and information as Dr. Pressly evidently is, consenting to stand on ground quite so narrow as that which this Lecture discloses. It appears, however, that a report having been put in circulation, that he concurred in the doctrine of "Catholic Communion," as published by his eminent preceptor, he thought it incumbent on him to purge himself from so painful a charge, by a public disavowal. We have no doubt that in doing so he acted conscientiously; and we are only sorry that his conscience or his circumstances constrained him to give his sanction to the doctrine here set forth. Are we to consider the members of his communion as *unanimous* in maintaining the doctrine of this Lecture? Unless we are deceived, we could name venerable men belonging to the Associate Reformed church who would be unwilling, even *now*, to concur with Dr. Pressly in some of his views in relation to this subject.

For ourselves we regret the publication of the doctrine of the Lecture before us at this time of day, on a variety of accounts. Primarily, because we think it unsupported by Scripture or reason: and also because its tendency we think, is to discredit the cause of truth, and thus ultimately to promote error. Human nature is prone to vibrate from one extreme to its opposite. And we cannot doubt that the extreme rigour of the doctrine of sect, is adapted to drive its advocates ultimately to the extreme of latitudinarianism. We have seen this principle exemplified in the history of several gen-



men once connected with Dr. Pressly's own communion, but now remarkable for nothing so much as for their reckless rejection of all creeds and venerated ecclesiastical landmarks. May no future metamorphosis exemplify the same principle !

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ART. III.—*Letters on the Difficulties of Religion.* By Catharine E. Beecher. 12mo. Hartford: 1836.

*Archibald Alexander*

FEMALE writers have been so few in this country, that we have never before had occasion to review a work from the pen of one of the softer sex. Miss Beecher, however, is not a stranger to the American public. She has produced already some works on education which have met with no small approbation. And whether her strong good sense, the versatility of her talents, or the ease and energy of her style be considered, it must be admitted, that as a writer she has no need of any peculiar indulgence from reviewers. Indeed there is nothing feminine in the productions of this lady: if the work had been anonymous we should never have suspected that it proceeded from the hand of a lady. As this praise may possibly be misapprehended, we distinctly avow, that there is nothing masculine in this performance, but its strength. The spirit of these Letters is throughout amiable. A love of truth and a heart of kindness and good will to men, are manifestly the characteristics of the writer. If there should be detected by the severe critic some appearance of self-complacency, and an unshrinking confidence in her knowledge and abilities in grappling with the most abstruse subjects of philosophy and theology, the discussion is generally so well sustained, and so much perspicacity and ingenuity are displayed, that some indications of literary vanity, —as the temptation to it was great,—may well be pardoned in so clever a writer. We doubt whether any of the celebrated female authors of the present age, excel Miss Beecher in intellectual strength; and we are pleased to observe the general sobriety and correctness of her opinions. We had been led to expect some degree of eccentricity or extravagance. We were led to believe that she entertained many opinions in theology, which, if not new, are in our day peculiar. We were therefore agreeably disappointed, in finding her, generally, the able advocate of doctrines which we con-

sider sound. In some cases, it is true, she slides over difficulties instead of removing them; and seems to think that she has placed a point in a satisfactory light, when in fact she has not appreciated the difficulty, or has dexterously kept it out of view.

The first letter in this series contains a just view of the New England character, and a fair vindication of the mass of the inhabitants of that enlightened region from the aspersions which have been cast on them through prejudice; or rather from observing the moral defects of certain itinerant traders who annually come forth from this hive of our population, and spread themselves through the southern country. Miss Beecher shows how unreasonable it is to characterize a whole people from a few, who while they partake of the intelligence so general among their countrymen, are destitute of the virtues by which they are distinguished. We are persuaded that this vindication of the people of New England is just; for before we visited that region, we acknowledge that we partook of the prejudices mentioned above; but a free intercourse with the people in the whole extent of the country, convinced us, that for simplicity and moral honesty and integrity, there are no people superior to those of this land of the pilgrims. That they do not exhibit so conspicuously, as some of the southern people, the virtues of generosity and hospitality, arises out of their peculiar situation. Profusion, or even the want of frugality in domestic economy, would be ruinous to a country so little productive in some of those things most useful for the subsistence of man. Most of the people are under the necessity not only of hard labour; but of exercising a sharp wit in contriving means to enable them to bring up and educate their children.

As a specimen of Miss Beecher's power to wield a severe and sarcastic pen, we extract her description of Fanny Wright.

“ And now, as to the moral tendencies of your system. I suppose it so involves disorganization in its very nature, that no parallel experiment can ever be made, for no community, founded on Atheist principles, can hold together long enough for such an experiment. All you can do is to select a few individuals, whose fine natural endowments have not been ruined by such blasting influences. As to Fanny Wright, you said you believed her to be honest in her opinions, amiable in her disposition, philanthropic in her efforts, and endowed with rare intellect. Allowing that you are as near right as partizans usually are, in estimating leaders, still I must compliment you by saying, that I believe you have secret feelings that would present a very different picture of this strange exercise of female character,

“ Every man of sense and refinement, admires a woman as a woman; and

when she steps out of this character, a thousand things that in their appropriate sphere would be admired, become disgusting and offensive.

“The appropriate character of a woman demands delicacy of appearance and manners, refinement of sentiment, gentleness of speech, modesty in feeling and action, a shrinking from notoriety and public gaze, a love of dependence, and protection, aversion to all that is coarse and rude, and an instinctive abhorrence of all that tends to indelicacy and impurity, either in principles or actions. These are what are admired and sought for in a woman, and your sex demand and appreciate these qualities, as much as my own. With this standard of feeling and of taste, who can look without disgust and abhorrence upon such an one as Fanny Wright, with her great masculine person, her loud voice, her untasteful attire, going about unprotected, and feeling no need of protection, mingling with men in stormy debate, and standing up with bare-faced impudence, to lecture to a public assembly. And what are the topics of her discourse, that in some cases may be a palliation for such indecorum? Nothing better than broad attacks on all those principles that protect the purity, the dignity, and the safety of her sex. There she stands, with brazen front and brawny arms, attacking the safeguards of all that is venerable and sacred in religion, all that is safe and wise in law, all that is pure and lovely in domestic virtue. Her talents only make her the more conspicuous and offensive, her amiable disposition and sincerity, only make her folly and want of common sense the more pitiable, her freedom from private vices, if she is free, only indicates, that without delicacy, and without principles, she has so thrown off all feminine attractions, that freedom from temptation is her only, and shameful palladium. I cannot conceive any thing in the shape of a woman, more intolerably offensive and disgusting; and I believe that in eulogizing her, you did violence to your judgment and your taste, from a natural desire to make a prominent member in your party appear respectable.”

In the second letter Miss Beecher attacks the doctrine of the fatalist and atheist, who maintain that man is a necessary being and not accountable for his actions. This she does, not by entering into the labyrinth of metaphysical reasoning about cause and effect, motives and volitions, but by an appeal to common sense, and to the conduct of these very persons in what relates to their bodily welfare. In the next letter the same subject is continued, with a particular application of the principles laid down to the theory of Robert Owen and Fanny Wright, which they have endeavoured to propagate in this country with a zeal and industry which would have been laudable in a good cause. Respecting Robert Owen's enterprize at New Harmony, Miss B. expresses herself with energy. “I have never seen or heard of any thing,” says she, “attempted by persons who have claims to rationality and to an enlightened education, that to me seemed more like the wild vagaries of lunacy than the establishment of Robert Owen at New Harmony. To collect together a company of persons of all varieties of age, taste, habits, and preconceived opinions, and teach them that there is no God, no future state, no retributions after death, no revealed stan-

dard of right and wrong, and no free agency: that the laws that secure private property are a nuisance, that religion is a curse, that marriage is a vexatious restraint, and the family state needless and unwise; and then to expect such a community to dwell together in harmony, and practise upon the rules of benevolence, what can be conceived more childish or improbable by any person who has seen the world, or known any thing of human nature? And yet such is the plan and expectation of the leaders of practical atheism. Their experiment, will probably prove one of the best antidotes to their wild theories."

This letter is concluded with some just remarks in favour of religion, as compared with the unnatural and comfortless system of atheism.

The fourth and fifth letters are addressed to a deist, and contain sound principles of evidence and just rules of investigation; and in the latter the perspicacious writer makes some excellent remarks on the grounds of objection to revelation, assumed by skeptical writers, and shows that judicious men are not governed by principles of this kind in their common affairs. Miss B. is wise in attempting to bring every class of opposers of religion to the principles of common sense; that is, to those maxims and rules by which sensible men are regulated in the management of their worldly concerns.

In the two following letters, though addressed to another person, the same subject is continued; and with much clearness and force of reasoning. In the sixth letter, the objections, derived from the numerous discordant opinions of Christians, are attempted to be answered. Miss B. undertakes to show that these discrepancies commonly relate to things not essential to salvation. And to confirm this view of the subject, she states a single proposition which includes every thing absolutely necessary to secure eternal happiness, in which all Protestants would readily unite. The proposition is, that "*Any man who sincerely and habitually loves his Maker, so as to make it the chief object of interest and effort, to discover his will and obey it, will secure eternal happiness.*" Now we do not believe, that all Protestants will be contented to have all fundamental articles of religion reduced to this one. It is true, indeed, that the man who sincerely and habitually loves God must be in a safe state; but if he has been a sinner, his love to God will not expiate his former sins, and cannot secure for him exemption from



deserved punishment; nor can his imperfect love, however sincere, procure for him a title to that heavenly inheritance which by sin has been forfeited. This article is much more suited to the deistical than the Christian system. The deist with whom Miss B. is reasoning, might turn upon her and say, what you have stated as the only thing essential, is believed by sober deists as firmly as it can be by any sect of Christians. We hold that there is a God of infinite perfection, whom it is our duty "to love sincerely and habitually, so as to make it the chief object of interest and effort to discover his will and obey it." He might justly say that there is nothing peculiar to Christianity in this creed: it is the very doctrine which deists holding natural religion have always inculcated. And if this is all that Protestants agree in, there is evidently no need of a revelation. It was a fundamental article in the creed of the Theophilanthropists of France, that there was one God, and that it was the duty of all rational creatures to love him supremely and do what was pleasing to him. Lord Herbert, the father of the English deists, maintained the same. We must say, therefore, that this method of answering the objection of deists, is not only unsatisfactory but dangerous.

Another objection very commonly urged by deists is, that the Bible teaches what is contrary to reason. With this our authoress grapples with no despicable skill; and upon the whole her answer appears to be solid. There are, however, some sentiments here advanced, which do not appear to us correct. On the 87th page we find the following: "I deny that you have any right to claim that there is a God, almighty in power, and infinite in wisdom, when you deny the authority of revelation, and I challenge you to bring me a single proof, by the aid of reason and nature, to show that the wisdom and power of the Creator are not limited." Now against this method of defending revelation, by denying the first principles of natural religion, we protest. It is the preposterous method of exhibiting the strength of a building, by tearing away the foundation on which it rests. If it cannot be proved by reason that God is infinite in knowledge, how can we depend upon any revelations which he may make? What sort of evidence of omnipotence and of infinite wisdom can be demanded, which does not exist in the creation? Can a limited power bring something out of nothing, existence out of non-existence? Can any stronger evidence of almighty power be conceived, than the creation of a world?

The conviction would not be stronger if we could believe that the creation was infinite. And in this argument there is no right to assume, without proof, that the creation is finite. Many philosophers have believed the contrary. If the evidence of infinite wisdom from the works of God is not complete, it is incumbent on those who deny it to show how greater wisdom could have been manifested. But we will argue the question on another principle. To deny that there exists proof of infinite wisdom and almighty power in creation, supposes that we have some conception of that which is infinite. If we have, whence was it derived? It must be answered, either from a survey of the works of God, which exceed all our powers of conception, or from the constitution of our own minds, by which we are able to transcend the limits of creation and conceive of a perfection not observed in the works of God. Take it either way and the conclusion follows, that all perfection of which we can conceive must be in the Great First Cause. For a greater perfection cannot be in the effect than in the cause, and whatever perfection we see in the creation, must exist *eminently* in the Creator. And again, as he is the author of our minds, whatever perfection we can conceive, must have its archetype somewhere, and if it be not in the works of God it must be in himself; for to suppose the conception of a perfection which has no existence any where is an absurdity; it is to conceive a nonentity, and call it perfection.

Our honest belief is, that when we have arrived at the knowledge of a first cause, whether by reason or tradition, we intuitively believe that all possible perfection belongs to him. This is evident, because all men, whether Christians or deists, agree in arguing on this principle as certain. Any theological proposition is considered as disproved, or reduced to an absurdity, if from it may be derived a conclusion inconsistent with the absolute and infinite perfection of God. If this foundation were taken away, we believe it would be found very difficult to re-establish it by revelation, however clearly it might be there inculcated; for a revelation from an imperfect being, limited in power and knowledge, and of course in every other attribute, could never be satisfactorily established.

Miss B. is not one of your timid and cautious writers, who go round difficult questions and shun the *cross*. She comes up boldly, we had almost said *manfully*, and looks them in the face. Whether in this she is always as wise as she is

bold, it is unnecessary to determine. In her seventh letter, she enters on the difficult subject of *the existence of natural and moral evil*. And we confess that in her way of reasoning she has come to a conclusion, which seems to vindicate the benevolence of God; but it is at the expense of his wisdom and power. It is, that God saves from all the evil and does all the good within his power. Whether this “gordian knot of theology,” as she terms it, is solved or only cut, by this explanation, we leave the discriminating reader to judge. But we are pained to read such expressions as that “God does the best he possibly can do—He has not the power of doing any thing better than he has done. All agree in saying that there is one thing that God has not the power to do, that is, the power to do more wisely or benevolently than he has done.”—“And saves from evil to the full extent of his wisdom and power.” This really appears to us to be darkening counsel by words without knowledge. We would ask Miss B., whence she derives the principles on which these conclusions are founded—from reason or revelation? It is taken for granted all along, that God can have nothing else in view than the promotion of the greatest possible degree of happiness. This principle is denied by many, and should have been demonstrated. Is not the whole of our reasoning here, on a subject entirely beyond our depth? And upon this principle, how can it be reconciled with infinite benevolence, that such systems as the one now existing were not brought into being from eternity; and that the work of creation is not continued every moment? We wish not to enter into this abyss which cannot be fathomed by human intellect. God has not authorized feeble mortals to lay down principles for the regulation of his conduct. It is best to put our hand upon our mouth, and to cry with Paul: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?” May not the reason of the permission of evil be far beyond the reach of our feeble intellect? May there not be reasons and principles of the divine conduct, of which in the present state, we are totally incapable of conceiving? God has not required it of any mortal to explain this difficulty, and most of those who have dared to explore this *terra incognita*, have rather given evidence of their presumption than of their humility.

Miss B. brings into view the two theories on this subject

which now divide New England theologians. The first is the *beltistian* or *optimian* scheme of Leibnitz, adopted by President Edwards and his followers, which is the key-stone of the Hopkinsian system, namely, that evil, natural and moral, 'is the means of the greatest possible good. According to this, there never has been, nor ever will be, one pain or one sin which could be spared. The deduction of the least quantity of natural or moral evil would render the system of the universe less perfect. "The only difficulty" says our author, "is to conceive of any amount of good that would be sufficient to repay the evils of everlasting suffering; but though we cannot do it, the infinite mind of Jehovah may perceive that the amount of evil in the universe will be as a drop to the ocean, compared with the good; and that in the nature of things there was as much contradiction in making all the good without any evil, as there is in making a hill without a valley, or machinery without friction." The difference between the two theories is, that the one supposes that God could not accomplish the greatest possible good without employing natural and moral evil as a means; the other supposes that moral evil never can be the means of good; but that in accomplishing the greatest good it could not be avoided. The one represents God as choosing and bringing about evil as a means of good; the other as hating the evil and endeavouring by every means to avoid it, but as unable to bring into being the good which he desired, without the accompaniment of evil. Miss B. seems to be inclined to the latter theory and we do not blame her for leaning to the theory which seems most favourable to just views of the evil of sin. But when this theory is extended so far as to represent God as exerting his utmost power to prevent sin, without effect, we are obliged strongly to dissent from all such views of the divine character and government. That God could have prevented the sin of angels and men, we have no more doubt than that he exists. The permission of their sins was necessary not as a means, but as an occasion of accomplishing that good which he will accomplish. This is the good old doctrine of the Christian church, which is marred and not improved by either of the new-divinity theories. As to there being any thing in the nature of *free agency* which would render evil necessary, as Miss B. intimates, it is to our view an unreasonable supposition; except on the principle of a self-determining power in the human will, which is an absurdity. If it were so, it would be



impossible for God to govern the world, or even to foresee what would be the ultimate event of things.

Upon the whole we regret that Miss B. ventured on this difficult subject. It argues rather too much confidence in her own strength; and in our opinion the result has not been favourable. The objections of no infidel will be removed or diminished, by this discussion.

The following nine letters, beginning with the eighth, are addressed to a person, who is represented to be a believer in Christianity, and a supporter of the institutions of the gospel; but who is so far from being a practical Christian, that he seriously doubts whether the Bible furnishes any authority for those views and principles which are considered evangelical, and pleads for liberality and charity as the prime Christian virtues. Though a professed believer in Christianity, this correspondent seems disposed to shelter himself under the great uncertainty which attends all religious opinions, and especially pleads as an apology for a neglect of the requirements of religion, the exceeding great variety of sects, and diversity of religious faith; so that amid the conflicting tenets it is next to impossible to ascertain what the Bible does teach. Miss Beecher assails the inconsistency of her friend with much smartness and good sense, and shows that his position is even more unfavourable than that of the infidel. She argues from the very nature of a *revelation*, that something must be *made known*; and insists that every thing necessary to salvation is so clear that every person who desires to discover the right way, may find "the method by which we are to secure future happiness after death." To demonstrate this, Miss B. goes to work very methodically and scientifically. She goes back to first principles, and lays down the position, that all systems of religion which ever existed, require either "*character, or external performances* irrespective of character." The former she asserts is not required by Pagans, Mohammedans, or the Romish church; but only certain external rites, while most Protestants require *character*, as that which decides the condition of men after death. The next step is to ascertain what is meant by *character*, or to use her own words, "what constitutes human character." The subject is first considered negatively; or some things are specified which are not taken into the account when we estimate moral character; among which are mentioned, "mere external actions without regard to motives," and "the *relative proportion* of good and bad actions."

But the following are the particulars which are always objects of regard in judging of human character. "First, *Natural disposition and constitutional peculiarities.*" Now, as the writer was so exact in defining what kind of character she meant, and was careful to exclude from the account "all intellectual and physical considerations," we were more than a little astonished to find the very first trait in moral character to be *natural disposition and constitutional peculiarities.* But these, she assures us, always come into consideration in estimating human character. Here, indeed, we have what is so abhorrent to some minds, physical and constitutional morality.

The next test of character is, "*a man's moral principles in resisting temptation, as learned by experience and testimony.*" To inform us what constitutes moral character is one thing, but to tell us what is the *test* of moral character is another. The first was what Miss B. set out to perform; but she seems to have forgotten her own purpose before she had proceeded through a single page. Moral character might exist in perfection, as it does in heaven, where there is no temptation.

The third thing laid down is "the nature of *a man's principles, or his intellectual views of what is right and wrong.*"

This again is very astonishing. Miss B., not two pages before, informed us that "intellectual and physical characteristics" are left out of view, and here we have as a principal characteristic of the moral kind, "a man's principles," which are explained to mean *his "intellectual views" of what is right and wrong.* And even if Miss B. had not thus palpably contradicted herself, we are sure she would not deliberately inculcate the opinion, that mere "intellectual views" constitute moral character in the view of mankind. Some of the wickedest men that ever lived had clear intellectual views of the difference between right and wrong. But perhaps we do not apprehend her meaning. Upon a perusal of her explanation and amplification of this principle, we suspect that what she intended to express was, not that mere intellectual views *constitute* moral character, (which, according to her own plan, ought to have been her purpose,) but that mankind, in judging of human character take into consideration the opinions which a person has adopted concerning right and wrong. As if one believes that no peculiar sacredness attaches to the sabbath, such an one should

not be censured for its violation, as we would one who believed in its sacred obligation. There may be some truth in this representation; but there are many other things entirely omitted in this enumeration of particulars, which are far more essential in the constitution of moral character than this difference of opinion. To judge how far erroneous belief justifies or excuses, it would be necessary to ascertain its origin and cause. In general, practical errors are the result of evil passions or habits, and do not exculpate the person who acts wrong under their influence.

The last thing which Miss B. mentions, as entering into the estimate of human character, is "*the predominant interest or ruling passion.*" The further we advance in this survey of the constituent parts of human character, the more are we bewildered. If we did not know that Miss Beecher's knowledge of the meaning of terms in the English language was precise, we should have supposed that she did not understand what she was writing. Or, if she had not so formally stated that she was about to lay down the principles which go to *constitute moral character*, we might have supposed, that she was merely mentioning some circumstances which had a tendency to modify human character. But in the close of this letter she says: "These four particulars, I believe, include all that is ever regarded as constituting moral character, viz.: constitutional peculiarities; strength and extent of principles as learned by experience; the nature of a man's principles, or his intellectual views of what is right and wrong; and the leading interest or governing purpose of the mind." Now we maintain, that of all these particulars, which are laid down as the only things that *constitute moral character*, there is not one which possesses any moral quality, except the second, and perhaps the fourth. A more obscure and defective analysis of moral character, we venture to say, cannot be found in print. But it seems from the opening paragraph, that her correspondent fully acquiesced in all her views and statements respecting the constituents of moral character; and admitted that those specified include all that ever are regarded in forming an estimate of character among mankind, and all that can be made a subject of divine legislation. It is evident, therefore, that Miss B. did not lay down these particulars without deliberation, but considered herself as laying the foundation of a system, to be constructed in her future reasonings. We would, therefore, pause a moment, to inquire what moral character is. We

suppose that to be moral character which is conformable to some moral law; taking the word *moral* in its broadest sense, as referring to qualities both good and bad, moral character is the character as measured by a moral rule. The next question is, what is the moral standard by which character must be judged? We know of no perfect moral rule, but the law of God. What are the requisitions of this law? Those things in human beings which are conformable to the law constitute a good moral character; those disconformed to this standard constitute a bad moral character. Now, supreme love to God, including all right affections towards him as our Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, and sincere and intense love to our fellow men, is what the law requires. Under these two heads all moral virtues are comprehended. But what does this lady tell us? That all moral character consists in constitutional peculiarities; in power of resisting temptation; in intellectual views of right and wrong; and in the ruling passion. How she could hope with such elements, to pour light into the mind of a *liberal Christian*, we know not. Her correspondent, however, as we have seen, is represented as coming fully into these preliminary views. But we suspect, that the acquiescence is fictitious, and that no human being ever expressed a consent to these radical principles of her system of moral philosophy. Upon a careful perusal of the ninth letter, it may be thought that we have, through ignorance of the real design of the author, done her some injustice in our criticisms; for here we observe that the whole of these preliminaries about the constitution of moral character are intended to pave the way for establishing the principle, that the only thing required of men, in order to secure eternal happiness, is that the ruling passion be right; and the result is, that unless our ruling passion be a desire to please God, it cannot be right. Accordingly, all the other particulars laid down as constituting moral character are here examined, and found to be of no account in the character which is certainly connected with future happiness; and after digging so deep for a foundation, and so scientifically ascertaining the elements of moral character, it turns out, that only one of these, namely, the ruling passion, has any necessary connexion with eternal life. Thus we have caught our author in the act of refuting her own errors; for after having mentioned constitutional peculiarities as the first constituent of a moral character, and of course a proper subject for the requisitions of a moral law; she now speaks



of these constitutional traits in a way which shows that she considers them as having no moral quality whatever; which is a correct view of the subject. Hear her own words: "To which of these four particulars does divine legislation refer, in teaching us how to gain eternal life? Will you take the Bible and examine for yourself? In the first place, does it teach that any particular trait or combination of traits, in the original mental constitution, is made the term of salvation? Is it any where taught that a man must have a naturally amiable disposition, or a calm temperament, or a pliant disposition, or any thing which depends solely on the original formation of the mind, and *for which we are no more responsible* (except for its proper regulation) than we are for the colour of the eyes or of the hair, &c." Here the inconsistency—and it is a glaring one—is, that one of the four grand elements of a moral character is a thing, for which we are no more responsible than for the colour of our eyes or hair!

If there be four constituent parts or elements of moral character, how does it happen that only one of them is necessary to future happiness? We might reason thus—either all these ingredients are necessary to the formation of a good moral character, or they are not. If the former, then as a good moral character is requisite to entitle us to eternal life, all these must be found in the character to which eternal life is promised in the Bible; if they are not necessary to a good moral character, why are they brought forward as the only things taken into consideration in estimating moral character? This whole discussion exhibits one of the strangest moral *disquisitions* we have ever met with. But that which we consider as by far the most censurable in these letters is, that in undertaking to point out what the Bible teaches as necessary to the acquisition of eternal life, there does not appear a solitary ray of evangelical light. There is no more notice taken of the mediation of Jesus Christ, than if he had never appeared in the world. If these letters, which professedly undertake to point out the way to future happiness, had been put into our hands without any information of their author, we should have judged that they must have proceeded from the pen of a deist or Unitarian, except that the words Christ and Bible are occasionally introduced, as if by accident.

Miss Beecher's system of religion may be reduced to a single point. The Bible requires many duties, a conformity to which is not necessary to obtain salvation; an internal cha-

acter of piety, which may consist with many imperfections, is all that is essential to that religion which is connected with future happiness; and this character of piety consists in the governing purpose or passion of the mind. When this is a desire to please God, the person may be said to possess true religion. Thus eternal life is made to depend entirely on a man's own goodness. To be justified by faith, is to be justified by a good principle or disposition within us. No intimation is any where given in these letters, that our acceptance with God is through the merits of another. According to her theory it is our own inherent righteousness or moral goodness by which we are rendered acceptable to God, and not by the merit or righteousness of Christ, which is never once mentioned or referred to. That this is her notion of the plan of salvation, is evident from the whole tenor of these letters; but as we do not wish to impose upon our readers the task of perusing the greater part of the volume, we will extract a few passages, by which the sentiments of the writer will be sufficiently evinced.

"A son has become disobedient and rebellious, refuses to submit to the rules of the family, dislikes his father for the restraint imposed, distrusts his judgment, questions his rectitude, and the wisdom and propriety of his family regulations; he finally forsakes his home becomes reckless, and abandoned, is indolent, ill-tempered, licentious, profane, and the follower of every evil way; an object of universal contempt, pity and reprehension.

"At last he comes under good influences, sees, and properly feels the folly of his course, makes up his mind to return to his home and submit himself to the laws and authority of his father, sees the folly and wickedness of his past course, laments his ingratitude, and the injury done to his father, feels the propriety, wisdom and goodness of his regulations, comes home, is forgiven and commences a course of virtuous industry, and obedience to all family regulations. Some of his bad habits yet cling to him, but he strives against them, and is constantly gaining in the power of self-control.

"Now in speaking of such a son, and of his change, all these expressions would be used to indicate the same thing. 'He is become a new man;' 'he is a new creature;' 'he has repented and returned;' 'he has submitted to his father;' 'he has become an obedient son;' he has 'turned from the evil of his ways;' or, to use the Scripture term, meaning the same thing, he is '*converted*.' He now has confidence, (or *faith*,) in his father; he now '*believes* in what his father said;' his *actions* are proof of his repentance;' 'by his *works* he shows what he feels and believes;' 'he is forgiven and treated like a good man,' (that is, he is *justified* by faith evinced by his works, or he is treated like a just man,) he is '*justified* by faith, and justified by works, which are the fruits of faith;' 'he is saved from ruin;' 'he has escaped condemnation,' and similar expressions.

"Now the question might here arise, what is it for which he is forgiven and justified? Is it for his good works? Is it for his good feelings? Is it for his good intentions? I say it is for all; but the commencement of the result was that *change in his mind*, which was the efficient cause of all the rest. It was the *determination* made by himself, and carried out into action, to become an

obedient and dutiful son, and this and its effects are expressed by all these various methods."

Miss Beecher evidently entertains the opinion, that the works which are excluded from being the ground of our justification before God, are mere external works without piety, and that the reason why faith justifies the sinner is, because it is an exercise of a pious heart; as will appear by the following extract:—

"This view is also opposed by all those passages that make a certain *state of the mind* the indispensable pre-requisite to salvation; for example, 'without *faith* it is impossible to please God,' 'he that *believeth not* shall be damned,' and many others of similar import. Now these terms do not express a certain amount of good works, but they *do* express a certain state of mind or character.

"Lastly, if you will examine the first part of Romans, and the Epistle to the Galatians, you will find this view of the subject fully and directly controverted. Though you will probably find many things hard to be understood, in some parts of these writings, you will not fail to discover that the current of instruction has this as its chief object, to prevent men from trusting to their good works, or the conformity of their actions to law, and to make them understand that we are to be justified *by faith*, or by that character or state of mind which consists in *so* believing in Jesus Christ, as to love him, and make it the business of our lives to please him.

"You will find, that this view which you have presented, has been equally the resting place of the pagan, the Mohammedan, the infidel, the catholic, and that class of *moral* men among protestants, who deny the necessity of regeneration. They all trust to their *conformity to the rules of rectitude in external actions*, without reference to the state of *the heart*; or in the language of Scripture, they seek 'justification by the works of the law'—instead of 'justification by faith;'—or in the language of common life, they hope to be saved by their good moral life, instead of becoming truly pious."

Now if this pious character alone is requisite for our salvation, the mission and sacrifice of Christ were totally unnecessary. This is surely "another gospel," and completely subversive of the gospel of Christ. We do not find fault with the *character* which the writer makes to be requisite; but we do seriously object to this method of explaining the gospel plan of salvation. There has risen up, within a few years, a scheme of religion, which, whilst it professedly rejects no doctrine of Scripture, leaves entirely out of view some of the cardinal doctrines of the Bible. Nothing is spoken of as requisite but right dispositions of heart. Now as God is as able to produce such dispositions, without the mediation and atonement of Christ as with them, the practical inference will be, that such a plan of redemption was not needed, or else some new and unscriptural view must be given of these doctrines.

In the sketch of the way of salvation, rendered so simple by Miss Beecher, we are not only deprived of the mediation of Jesus Christ, but we hear nothing of the agency of the Holy Spirit, which is so prominent a doctrine in the old-fashioned divinity. As a certain *character* is all that is required, in order to the possession of eternal life, the question very naturally occurs, have we ability to attain such a character? Miss B., who is not afraid to grapple with any difficulty, whether theological or metaphysical, does not shun the inquiry, but meets it boldly; and if we may judge from appearances, feels as if she had indeed the ability to untie this gordian knot. Before entering on this vexed question of human ability, she lays down most confidently a position, which, if true must entirely supersede the agency of the Holy Spirit in preparing the soul for future happiness. Her words are, (p. 170.) "*I am sure* God does not require any thing of us but what we have *full ability* to perform." She appears however to know that there are difficulties involved in the subject, but with her wonted self-complacency, she says, "I think I see a way of obviating the difficulties you urge." As she thinks that she can solve this difficulty which has hitherto baffled the efforts of our strongest men; it will at least be amusing to follow her through the mazes of a metaphysical train of reasoning. The great difficulty which she attempts to remove, is, that our affections which are required by God's law are not subject to the control of our volitions; how then can we be said to possess the ability to comply with such requisitions? Take her answer in her own words.

"It is true, we have not the *direct* control of our affections, so that by a mere act of volition, we can love and hate, just as we can, by an act of our will, either shut or open our eyes. If we love a friend, we cannot, by a mere act of choice, cease to feel this affection. If we are indifferent, or dislike a person, we can no more by any act of volition, change these feelings into love. And I do not suppose that the divine law demands any such attempts. But though we have not the control of our emotions, by direct acts of volition, we have an indirect control of them, which is quite as powerful, for which we are held accountable, and to which the requisitions of the Bible are directed.

"I think I can illustrate my views of the subject by a familiar example. A husband is united to a virtuous and amiable wife, whom he has tenderly loved. But a course of extravagance and vice has estranged him from her; he knows that she has ceased to respect and love him; he is reproved by her superior virtues, and irritated by his conscience in her presence. He treats her so unworthily, that all affection ceases on both sides. He learns to think only of her faults, and depreciates or forgets her excellencies, and has lost all desire for her society, and all feeling of affection. Now suppose he were admonished of his wicked course, and expressed a wish to alter; he would be directed, in the first place, to 'love his wife;' suppose he should plead that he had not the control of



his emotions, that he did not love his wife, and choosing to do so would not produce love; and then he comes to you to relieve him from this difficulty. You would direct him to use the appropriate means of awakening affection. You would tell him to make up his mind to forsake his dissolute companions; to reform his life; to return to his wife, and make suitable acknowledgments; to commence all the practical duties of a kind and attentive husband; to take all those methods that would be most likely to regain the respect and affection of his wife and to awaken his own regard for her; and you would assure him that if he did take this course, inasmuch as his wife was excellent and lovely, it would inevitably result in the return of her affection to him, and the renewal of his own affection for her. And every man of common sense would approve your advice, and be certain of its successful results, if it were followed. Here, then, you perceive the manner in which a man has the control of his affections toward a fellow being.

“Now I suppose we have the control of our affection, as it respects our Maker, to an equal extent, and that we are to exercise it by similar methods. The husband is not to awaken his affection to his wife by sitting down and thinking of her, and trying by an act of volition to make love spring up in his heart. He makes up his mind in the first place to use all appropriate means, and while he follows this course, affection springs up in his bosom. So the alien from the heavenly Parent, when ‘he comes to himself,’ says, ‘I will arise [and go to my father.]’ He puts himself in the way of duty; he turns his mind to think upon the folly of his ways; he repents, and resolves to do no more so wickedly; he studies the works and the word of his Maker; he daily seeks to commune with him; he consecrates his time, property, and influence, to his service, and in this course of obedience, emotions of affection soon glow in his bosom, and cheer and invigorate all his efforts.

“Now *love*, in the language of the Bible, means the same as it does every where else. It includes not merely the simple emotions of affection, but all the thousand words and actions that are proofs of love. The man then begins to love, who makes up his mind to obey, and commences the course of obedience; for obedience forms a part of love, as much as the emotions. When we see a son anxiously striving to meet all the wishes and wants of a parent, seeking his society, defending his good name, promoting his interests, and devoted to his will, we say such a son loves his father most devotedly, though we have no other evidence of his feelings. Another son disobeys and disregards his father’s requirements, crosses his plans, neglects his interests, avoids his society, and disregards his requests. Suppose we could look into his heart, and perceive that it was sometimes visited with emotions of complacency and affection; still we should say he did not love his father, and bring his conduct as the proof.

“Another case might be supposed, of a son who, from the cold dictates of duty, and with the fear of a slave, performed all the external duties of affection, while in his heart he feared and disliked the parent who controlled him. These actions might deceive us; but if the father could read the heart of his child, his services would not be received as proofs of love. In all these cases, there is a deficiency, so that love would not be said to exist till it was supplied. Love, then, includes both emotions and corresponding actions.

“But as the existence of strong feelings of affection, always does produce actions to correspond, it often occurs that the emotions are spoken of as the principle, and the actions as the fruits. At other times, the actions that are prompted by affection, are called by the name of love; as for example, ‘This is the love of God, that ye keep my commandments.’ As if a father should say to his son, ‘your love is shown by your obedience to my wishes;’ or, ‘obedience is love.’

“It seems to me, therefore, that the control of our emotions is within our power, and though we cannot control them by direct volition, as men control

the movement of their limbs, we have an indirect control that is as efficient, and as properly a subject of divine legislation, as external actions."

As Miss B. despatches the whole subject of human ability in the preceding paragraph, we must try to make our remarks as brief as we can. In the first place, we would ask her on what ground she is so confident that God never requires any thing from man, but what he has *full ability* to perform? Does she appeal to it as a self-evident principle, obvious to the intuition of every man of common sense, or is she able to establish it by convincing arguments? If on either ground it can be rendered certain, it decides the controversy. But that it cannot be admitted as an intuitive, self-evident truth, is manifest from the fact that there always have been multitudes who utterly deny the truth of the position. There are now hundreds, and thousands of intelligent men who do not receive this as an axiom, but who believe, that although in the state in which man was created, God could require nothing from him but what he had full ability to perform; yet that now when he has voluntarily corrupted himself, the same axiom will not apply. If man has by a wilful rebellion destroyed his susceptibility of loving God, does the obligation of God's law forever cease, and is man under no obligation to obey his Creator any more? Can a creature thus free himself from the obligation of the divine law, by the act of sinning? Then Miss B. ought not to have assumed this principle, for in this argument it is a mere *petitio principii*; it takes for granted the main point in controversy. And this is continually done by all who are asserters of man's *full ability* to do the will of God. They seem to consider all who deny their favourite position as belying the connections of their own minds. We do not remember to have seen the shadow of an argument to demonstrate the position, and we are fully persuaded that the maintainers of depraved man's *full ability* to do the will of God, have confounded together two things which are entirely distinct; and have got into the habit of applying to one case, a maxim which is only true in relation to another case. It is true, and admitted by all men in their senses, that when the will to perform an act is good, and yet the ability is wanting, the person stands acquitted of blame in the judgment of all rational beings. And we admit that this plea, if truly made at the tribunal of God, will exculpate the person from all blame and punishment. As if a man sincerely wishes to relieve the indigent or to rescue one perishing, but cannot accomplish his wish, no blame can attach

to him for failing to do what he desired to do but could not. This maxim is universally true, and when fairly explained, is denied by no man who has common sense. This is the maxim current among men, which is admitted and acted on in courts of justice and in all the transactions of social life. It is a maxim recognized in every family on earth, pagan or Christian, and understood by every child five years old. Concerning ability thus explained, there is therefore no dispute, and can be none. But when this maxim, which is only true of actions consequent on volition, is applied to will itself, or to those moral dispositions in which character principally consists, it is utterly irrelevant. In regard to affections of the mind, the only inquiry among men is as to their existence and nature. In order to censure or condemn them they never go into any inquiry, whether the subject of them had power to feel otherwise. Whatever of moral disposition a man possesses is his own, and our judgment of him must be according to its nature, whether he could divest himself of it or not. The more inveterate a man's malignant temper, the more difficult to be reformed; of course the less ability has he to become a good and benevolent person; but surely he is not excusable in proportion to the strength of his malignancy. Some have endeavoured to make the distinction between the two cases by distinguishing ability into natural and moral; and while this distinction, though unphilosophical, was observed, no practical evil arose. But of late, many of the advocates of plenary ability have seen that their favourite maxim could not be consistently maintained, while any kind of inability was acknowledged. They have therefore dropped the distinction, and now hold that, in order to be accountable for disobedience, we must have full power to obey; or as Miss B. expresses it, "full ability to perform" what God requires. The *natural ability* which some maintain is precisely that ability which is requisite to render us culpable when we might have performed an act, mental or corporeal, if we had willed it; or when we have willed or desired to perform an act, and were unable for want, not of will, but of power, this inability exculpates us from all blame. This is the very case to which the maxim of common sense applies, and concerning which all men are agreed. But when they attempt to explain their *moral ability*, they find themselves inextricably puzzled. Ability is always relative to something to be performed. Moral ability, as distinguished from natural, can be nothing else than the disposition and will to perform such ex-

ternal acts of obedience as the law requires. But these very dispositions and volitions are themselves the very essence of moral obedience to the law of God, because his law requires the supreme love of the heart. If then love is the essence of what God requires, where shall we look for the ability to enable us to love? It has been by some asserted to be in the will, but this is to reverse the order of nature, according to the laws of which the will is governed by the affections, but not the affections by the will. Thus upon analysis, what has been called *moral ability* turns out to be the essence of obedience itself, instead of an ability to perform obedience; and *moral inability*, when analyzed in like manner, is nothing but sin in its essence, the want of a right disposition and a right will, the main things which the law of God requires. It is admitted, that when the inquiry is merely about external acts, this distinction may serve well enough. But when we carry our inquiries into the motives, affections, and volitions, it utterly fails of guiding us to satisfactory conclusions. Nevertheless, as it admits substantially, though not with philosophical accuracy, what we maintain to be the truth, we are not disposed to dispute the propriety of the distinction; for as its abettors hold that the sinner labours under an invincible moral inability, which, so far from excusing him, is the very ground of his culpability; they fully admit that the maxim, of which so much use has been made, does not apply to the affections and dispositions of the heart.

In the foregoing extract, Miss B. admits that the affections do not follow the volitions—that our willingness to love one to whom we are indifferent, will not produce love. So by willing to love God, we are not led in fact to love him. Thus far she is candid in stating the difficulty. But her very first attempt to untie the knot, involves her in a manifest absurdity. She says, “I do not suppose that the divine law requires any such attempts.” That is, the divine law does not require us to love God, or to will to love him. What does it require then? She tells us next, that “though we have not the control of our emotions by direct acts of volition, we have an indirect control of them, which is quite as powerful, and for which we are held accountable, and to which the requisitions of the Bible are directed.” Surely the good lady did not consider the import of her own words when she penned this sentence. If it had been uttered by some cold-blooded, old-school preacher, we should not soon hear the last of it. It would be trumpeted from the east to the west by many, as a doctrine hostile to all practical religion. The



errors of these few lines are enormous. It is asserted, contrary to the plainest dictates of common sense and experience, that an indirect control of our emotions is quite as powerful as that by direct volition. Take her own illustration in the next paragraph, from the case of a man whose affection is, by a vicious course on his part, alienated from a virtuous and amiable wife. How is he to recover his lost affection? "You would direct him," says she, "*to use the appropriate means of awakening affection.*" And then she prescribes a round of duties requiring much time and patient perseverance. Now supposing the good effect of these means were certain, (which we shall in due time show not to be the fact) it must be evident to every mind, that this indirect and round about method of controlling our affections is by no means as powerful as that by direct volition. But it is again asserted, that for this indirect control alone are we held accountable. This is a most extraordinary assertion. What, is not every man under immediate and constant obligations to love God with all his heart? If he is not, he is chargeable with no sin for not loving him until he has gone the whole round of duties necessary to be observed, to awaken his lost affection for his Maker. What is true of the instant duty of loving God is also true of repentance. God *now* commandeth all men every where to repent, and no man is excusable for his impenitence for a single hour; but according to the doctrine here taught, he is only accountable for using indirect means to bring himself to a right disposition of mind. This is precisely the error, which men of the new-school have been in the habit of charging on *dead* orthodoxy; and some of them have represented their great success which they modestly claim for their ministry above that of old-school preachers, to have been owing in part to their preaching *immediate* repentance. But Miss B. now teaches that we are only accountable for the use of the indirect means of producing right affections. Therefore, as a man cannot sin in circumstances where he is not accountable, the impenitent man commits no sin by neglecting to repent immediately. He is only accountable for the use of the indirect methods of producing repentance and the love of God.

And we are further informed in conformity with what was before said, "that to these indirect efforts to obtain right affections, the requisitions of the Bible are directed." We regret that Miss B. has not given us at least a specimen of these Bible requisitions, by a reference to chapter and verse

where they may be found; for as far as we are acquainted with the commandments of God contained in the Bible, they require the immediate and perfect performance of all duty. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy strength," &c.

But although the ingenious writer maintains, that by this indirect method of influencing the affections, we have quite as much control over them as we could have by direct volition, we are of opinion that this rests on her bare assertion, and has not a particle of evidence to support it. In most cases of alienated affection, we venture to say that her *recipe* would utterly fail. A man whose heart had been vitiated by a long course of base and criminal conduct, would not be at all likely to find a pure and virtuous affection enkindled towards a long ill-treated and hated companion. Such worthless and depraved men are not susceptible of pure and elevated affections of friendship. Besides, the most important part of the direction goes upon the supposition that the husband, instead of being deeply depraved has the disposition to do all that could be expected from the most virtuous man. He must be reformed before he can commence these means of reformation. In order to regain his affection, lost by his vicious conduct, he must "forsake his dissolute companions; reform his life; return to his wife and make suitable acknowledgments; commence all the duties of a kind and attentive husband," &c. "And we are authorized to assure him, that if he did take this course, inasmuch as his wife was excellent and lovely, it would inevitably result in the return of her affection to him, and the renewal of his own affection for her."—"Now I suppose," says she, "that we have the control of our affection, as it respects our Maker, to an equal extent, and that we are to exercise it by similar methods." All this is theory, and nothing more. We have been acquainted with hundreds of abandoned husbands, who had ceased to feel any affection for virtuous and amiable wives, but never knew one to reclaim himself and recover his affection by this process, which is so confidently recommended as infallible. Miss B. would reply, that the reason was, that the *appropriate means* were not used; and this brings us up to the very point of the difficulty; the supposition of the use of such means by such persons involves an absurdity. To produce a right state of mind, a right state of mind is required. It is our sincere belief, that virtuous emotions were never generated in the heart of an abandoned profligate, by any such pro-

cess, since the world began. Let us, however, consider the case of a sinner at enmity with his Maker, and deeply sunk into habits of vicious indulgence, in which he delights. What would Miss B. direct such an one to do? She could not tell him at once to love God or repent of his sins, because he cannot control his emotions by a direct act of volition; he is not accountable for not producing in himself these pious emotions, and the Bible does not require it of him. Well; what must he do? Why break off from his dissolute companions, and perform all the duties of a good man, &c. But he hates God and loves sin. How can he be induced to engage in the use of such means? Or if he does, with such a temper of mind, can Miss B. assure him that his lost affection to his Maker will return? Will external acts of duty proceeding from an evil heart enkindle love to God?

We know not what to call Miss Beecher's system of religion. It is far below any of the *isms* which divide the Christian world. Here is laid down a method of acceptance with God, having no reference to a Mediator; and a change of heart without the least aid from the Holy Spirit. In this whole concern the need of such grace is never hinted. "He puts himself in the way of duty; turns his mind to think on the folly of his ways; repents and resolves to do no more wickedly; studies the works and the word of his Maker; daily seeks to commune with Him; consecrate his time, property, and influence to his service, and in the course of obedience, emotions of affection soon glow in his bosom, and cheer and invigorate all his efforts." Here you have Miss Beecher's *recipe* for the conversion of a sinner; for changing enmity into love. One defect we cannot but notice. The sinner must be a well-disposed good man before he is converted, or he will never be disposed to do what she requires of him; unless he plays the hypocrite. Perhaps, too, the wicked heart, instead of breaking and yielding, and glowing with affection, might remain hard, and the person be conscious of unsubdued pride and enmity. We have witnessed many such cases, in which all external means had been used; and Miss B. does not prescribe for such a case. She might say, indeed, if the appropriate means were used in a proper manner, the effect would certainly follow. That is, if the sinner will believingly and piously read, pray, &c. he will be sure to be converted; love to God will soon glow in his heart. This much resembles the promises and prescriptions of empirical venders of catholicons and nostrums. There is just as much quackery in religion as in medicine.

In our review of Miss Beecher's Letters, our plan is to go straight on, and to remark on what we find, without looking forward to see if she may not have said something in a subsequent part to supply the defects or correct the errors which may be apparent. The consequence is, that in our progress, we find it necessary to give her credit sometimes for sounder opinions, than from her previous matter, we thought she entertained. Thus in her fourteenth letter, she avows her belief in the supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit in producing a change of heart; of which, however, we heard not a word in the preceding letter, where she gave explicit directions for effecting this change. Her correspondent seems to have remarked the same deficiency in this respect, and to have brought to view the doctrine of our entire dependence on divine agency, as inconsistent with the account which she had given of conversion. She here attempts to reconcile this doctrine with the views which she had already exhibited. The method of reconciliation, as far as we apprehend her meaning, is, that in many cases men have *ability* to perform a certain thing, but the motives to it are not strong enough to excite them to vigorous action, when if by some foreign influence the strength of these motives is increased, we perform what we before had power to do, but which we never would have done had not this increase of the power of the motives taken place. And this is the office of the Holy Spirit, to give this increased energy to the motives which should influence the mind. This part of the subject, however, is treated very concisely, and we are left much in the dark, as to the precise nature of the efficiency ascribed to this supernatural agency. And upon a review of the sentiments of the former letter, on which we have remarked, we cannot see any necessity for such supernatural influence, any more in the case of producing in our own hearts love to God, than in the case of the reformed husband. No doubt, the great defect is the want of a prevailing motive to turn from sin unto God,—but what is the requisite motive? It is no other than love to God, and this is the very thing which she says any man may produce in himself by the use of appropriate means. We readily admit that, in a carnal mind which is enmity against God, this motive is not strong enough, because it has no existence. From what has been said, the reader will perceive how much light has been shed by this female theologian on the subject of human ability, concerning which there has been so much unprofitable controversy in our day.



The fifteenth letter is intended to show the reasonableness of our being required to love God supremely, by showing that his character is lovely. In order to make this clear, Miss B., who delights to go up to ultimate principles, undertakes to inform us what those particulars are which can be the causes of affection; and the reader will be surprized to learn that they are, *personal beauty, physical strength, intellectual superiority, the power of sympathy, the power of giving and appreciating benevolence and affection.* Each of these she dwells upon at some length, but we are beginning to grow weary of this species of philosophizing, and cannot consent to follow her through the details; especially, as we find nothing which it would be profitable to make the subject of remark.

The seventeenth and eighteenth letters, in this volume, are addressed to a Unitarian; and in them the writer displays no small intellectual acumen. She takes up and answers the objections commonly made by Unitarians to the doctrine of Trinitarians, with admirable adroitness. No one can impartially read the first of these letters without being convinced that Miss B. possesses a penetrating and discriminating mind. We have observed only one thing objectionable in these letters. We regret to find in this volume the old exploded heresy of the Apollinarists, stated as one of the opinions now entertained by some Trinitarians. We hope there are very few in the present day who are inclined to this untenable, and we must think, very absurd opinion. We believe that Miss Beecher herself has a leaning towards this long exploded heresy, and we cannot but feel astonished that a mind so perspicacious and penetrating, should become entangled in an error fraught with consequences so manifestly unreasonable. The very statement of the doctrine involves what is as impossible as that God should cease to exist. It implies that the Son of God, while incarnate, was limited in the exercise of his divine attributes, and that the divine nature was subject to all the infirmities of human appetite and passion, and suffered all the pains which were endured by the man Christ Jesus. This subject was so fully canvassed when the heresy was condemned in the ancient church, that we need only refer our readers to the writers of that age. If any one can embrace the opinion that the eternal God can suffer so as to be overwhelmed with distress, so as to pour out strong cries and tears, and to complain of being forsaken, we should deem it a useless labour to attempt to reason with such a per-

son. If the great God can be the subject of such sufferings, instead of being blessed for evermore, he is probably the most miserable of beings. But all such opinions border on the blasphemous; we have no patience to consider them.

What Miss B. says in the twentieth and twenty-first letters, respecting the refusal of the orthodox to recognize Unitarians as fellow Christians, is good: the Jews and Moham-medans have just as much claim to be admitted to the communion of the Christian church. Among the Unitarians in England, it became a question whether some members who had adopted deistical sentiments should be excluded from fellowship. It was a hard question: and determine it as they might, it ought to stop their mouths from complaining of the want of charity in the orthodox. Miss B. properly denies, that Unitarians have manifested more meekness and charity than the orthodox church. She also has some sensible remarks in answer to those who are for ever declaiming against "creeds."

We shall now bring this review, already sufficiently protracted, to a close, by a few remarks on the last letter in the book, which relates to "the points of difficulty and disagreement in the Presbyterian church." We are sorry that Miss B. thought it incumbent on her to meddle with this delicate subject. In the first place, her personal relations are not favourable to an impartial view of this controversy. In the next place, Miss B. has not had the opportunity of being sufficiently acquainted with the old-school party in the Presbyterian church, or she never would have attributed to them opinions which we are sure are not held by one in a thousand of this class, if by any. Indeed, the whole letter, though written in her usual style of self-confidence, and as though she understood every thing, is full of inaccuracy and error. For example, she says, "The evangelical Christians are not divided into sects on matters of doctrinal belief, but merely on matters of organization, church government, and external rites," which is far from being correct. Some of those sects which she enumerated as evangelical, are strictly Calvinistic in their doctrines, and will not admit into their communion those who deny this system. The Presbyterians and Cumberland Presbyterians (now a large body) differ in nothing but doctrine. The Methodists are professed Arminians, and on this account chiefly, are separated from Calvinistic sects; and the Reformed Methodists differ from Presbyterians in nothing of importance but in doctrine.

Her account of the Presbyterian church courts, as it relates to the constitution of Synods, shows her ignorance of the system. She says they are formed by a delegation from Presbyteries!

The opinions which she ascribes to Antinomians, according to which "good works and a blameless life are not demanded as evidence of piety," we have never met with; and as to the extreme of *Arminianism*, according to which "any supernatural aid of the Holy Spirit is not needed for the formation of Christian character," we have known none who approached nearer to it than Miss B. herself, and others of the ultra new-school party.

The account which she gives of the point on which parties differ in the Presbyterian church, is very unfair; and we might justly retort upon her much of what she has charged upon the Unitarians. She ought to have given the opinions of the parties in their own words, or at least in language such as they use. One party is represented as holding, "that the mind of man is so constituted by nature, that it loves to do wrong rather than to do right." This is not the opinion of any class or party. None hold that the tendency to evil is owing to the *constitution* of the mind. Again, she charges them with holding, "that there is a natural aversion to the character of God when truly seen." This may be a just view of the sentiments of a certain class in New England; but the great body of old-school theologians in the Presbyterian church, hold that depravity blinds the understanding, as well as hardens the heart. They hold that an unregenerate sinner is incapable, until enlightened by the Spirit of God, of seeing the true character of God. When she charges them with holding, "that many of the natural desires and affections of the human mind, that arise involuntarily, are wrong;" we do not know what she means. Does she mean to represent it as a peculiarity of old-school theologians, that they hold the natural desires of avarice, envy, ill-will, and lust, to be evil, even if the consent of the will to their gratification is not given? This they do hold, and we should be loth to admit that any in our country entertain a different opinion. "And that man by his own choice or efforts has no power to change this natural constitution." This they all hold with unwavering firmness, and believe that the contrary is not only repugnant to Scripture, but a doctrine replete with absurdity, hold it who may. "They suppose that until this constitution of mind is changed, it is impossi-

ble for a man to love God." To this we have nothing to except but the word *constitution*, which as we understand it, properly expresses the faculties which belong to the mind. If it be here used to express moral depravity existing in the mind, we admit it to be a correct view. And with the same exception we admit what follows in the account of the opinions of the orthodox as being not only their belief, but the plain declarations of God's word.

Our strongest objection, however, is to the description given of the opinions of the other class in the church. She tells us that those hold, "that men are made with the natural desire of happiness and fear of suffering, and that all their acts of choice have reference to gaining the one, or avoiding the other." Now we never heard of any one maintaining that man was not made with a natural desire of happiness. Surely this is not one of the discoveries of the new divinity. Some people, at least had an inkling of this before the new divinity was hatched. As to what is here linked in with this natural desire of happiness, that all acts of choice have reference to this natural desire, we willingly give it up to the new-school, not as a discovery of any of their acute theologians—for it is as old as man—but we utterly disclaim the doctrine as pure *selfishness*. When she says that these men hold, "that they do not like a thing because it is wrong, or dislike it because it is holy," the implication is that the other class of theologians hold the contrary—if not, why is this brought forward? None, that we know of, think that men choose sin merely because it is sin. There is no peculiarity here. And in what follows, there is so much vagueness, that we know not what the writer means, unless it is to assert what has been called the self-determining power of the will. Whether this is not a part of the system of the more modern new-school men, is doubtful. Certainly their scheme requires such an appendage. And as soon as they avow it, we will willingly give it up to them, with all its absurdities. "That the mind," says she, "is made so as to be able to understand, admire, and love the character of God, and to perceive the excellency and happiness of living to do good to others, instead of being supremely devoted to gaining good for self alone." Does she mean that the mind, in its depraved and fallen state, has the power ascribed to it? Then surely there is no need of regeneration. It is essentially right already. But how are we to reconcile what is here said about "living to do good to others," &c., with what



was before said about acts of choice having reference to the desire of happiness? But let this pass. Next we have what may be called the cardinal doctrine of new-schoolism, man's full ability to convert himself. She lays it down as a part of this creed,

"That God requires men to give him their affections and the service of their lives, and that they have *full power* to comply with this requisition."

In contrast with this perfect power attributed to man by this school, she represents their opponents as holding that man labours under a *physical inability*. Now we venture to say that in all the sermons or essays written by old-school men, she cannot find a single passage which uses this language. Nay; though they do hold that man is utterly unable to regenerate his own heart, they unanimously deny, that the inability under which he lies is properly called a *physical inability*. Why cannot Miss B. apply her own rules of equity to the dispute between the old and new-school parties, as well as to the Unitarian controversy? But she is not contented with representing the opinions from which she dissents in language foreign to their usage, but she with all imaginable coolness says, "I suppose one of these theories, when clearly exhibited, to be no other than the theory of *fatalism*, and the other is its counterpart, or the system of *free agency*." We regret, that Miss B. has not given us her definition of fatalism and free agency. Perhaps we should have agreed to admit, that old Calvinists hold what she calls fatalism; as several eminent systematic writers speak of what they call "Christian fate," by which they mean the same as predestination. But we deny that there is any propriety in applying this word to the opinions which she ascribes to a certain class of theologians. Fatalism is a blind necessity, unconnected with the plan or will of an intelligent being. If the mere certainty of events makes fatalism, then it will follow from every scheme which admits the foreknowledge of God; or if the reason why Miss B. thinks that the abettors of the old theology are fatalists, is because they maintain that our volitions have a cause which produces them with certainty, we are persuaded that she will not be able to escape fatalism but by taking refuge in absurdity. It is easy to bring such charges, but quite another thing to substantiate them. Until some evidence, therefore, is adduced to establish the fatalism of these men, we shall consider all such charges of the nature of a calumny, intended to render certain opinions odious, by giving them a bad name.

We are more and more persuaded that Miss B. is an advocate for the self-determining power of the will. "The mind," says she, "has the same power to choose what is not chosen, as to choose as it does." Now in one sense this is true; there was no physical obstacle to another choice. If the mind had been *so disposed* it could have chosen otherwise; that is if other motives had operated, or existing motives with greater force, another choice might have been made. And who ever denied this? But she must mean, that all circumstances and motives remaining unchanged, the mind might have made another choice. This is precisely the doctrine of the self-determining power of the will. Without entering into this intricate controversy we would ask Miss B. why the person who acts without reason or motive, is more a free agent than one who uniformly acts under the influence of motives? We think that it can be shown that such actions, if they can exist, are more fitly referred to fate, than such as are the effect of rational choice.

Miss B. seems to have little studied the controversies which agitate the Presbyterian church, or she would not confine the difficulty to a difference of opinion, merely on the subject of human ability. There are many other points of difference of even more importance than this. In stating the difference too, she falls into the same vagueness and inaccuracy as before. "Those who fully teach," says she, "what I call the system of free agency, hold that depravity consists in *the want of the principle of piety.*" Now we ask, do these old-school men deny this? Do they not with one accord assert it as being the very fountain from which the streams of depravity flow? We are surprised to hear Miss B. saying that depravity consists in *the want of piety.* The maxim of her party is, that all sin consists in *acts*, voluntary acts; and that there is no iniquity in defect. It is a purely old Calvinistic opinion, that the *formal* nature of sin is *defect.* But we cease to expect accurate statements from Miss B. We suspect that she is inclined to meddle with too many things, and with things out of her reach. We are glad that Paul has said so emphatically, "I suffer not a woman to speak in the church;" and although he has not prohibited them from teaching by writing for the public, yet we cannot but think, if he were now on earth, he would discourage the female sex, however gifted or learned, from mixing themselves in theological and ecclesiastical controversies. We would, therefore respectfully recommend it to Miss Beecher, to choose some

other field for the exercise of her talents, and cease her efforts to untie the gordian knots of theology and metaphysics. As she has studied the art of education and is said to excel in that department, let her be content to shine as an eminent instructor of the youth of her own sex. Or if that would be too great a restraint upon her prolific mind, we sincerely advise her to follow the example of Hannah More, and expatiate as widely as she will in the extensive field of Christian Ethics, Practical Piety, and Christian Manners.

We trust that we have in no instance departed from Christian courtesy in this review. As reviewers, we have been placed in a new attitude, and if we have in any respect violated the laws of politeness, we are very sorry; for although we differ widely from Miss B. on many points, we entertain a high respect for her talents and her amiable temper. But we hope she will consent to leave theological, and ecclesiastical contention to male polemics, who delight in such warfare; or, who feel that it is a work which they are bound in duty to perform; and if our advice should have any influence in inducing her to adopt a course so well suited to her sex and her profession, our end will be attained; for as to converting her to our opinions, we are not so presumptuous as to cherish such a hope.

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ART. IV.—*Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms.\**

*Archibald Alexander*

As soon as it was determined that Luther should appear at Worms, his enemies endeavoured to bring it about that he should go thither without the imperial safe-conduct, but with that of the elector alone. In this way, they thought that Luther would either be deterred, or that he might more easily be seized. But the elector did not countenance this proposal of the emperor, and upon this was issued on the 26th of March, 1521, the imperial citation to appear at Worms within twenty-one days, with a safe-conduct, together with the Bull and the discourse of Aleander. The former had this remarkable superscription: "To the Reverend, Pious, and beloved Doctor Martin Luther, of the Augustinian order;" and neither of the instruments contained any

\* From the German of Marheineke. 1831.

mention of a recantation to be demanded. He was furnished with letters of protection from the princes through whose territories he was to pass, as well as from the Elector of Saxony and his brother John, and Duke George. As his personal escort Caspar Sturm was appointed Herald, under the title of Germany. On the same account the elector expressly wrote on the 12th of March to the bailiff and council of Wittenberg, commanding them to provide that no hinderance in word or deed should occur, and that, if necessary, he should have a guard, and a respectable outfit. Luther then set out, in God's name, with his herald, for Worms, accompanied by Justus Jonas, afterwards Prebendary at Wittenberg, Nicholas von Amsdorf, Peter von Schwaven, a Danish nobleman, and Jerome Schurf, a civilian of Wittenberg.

At the same time it was that the pope, in excess of contentious zeal, repeated the excommunication of Luther in another form. On Maundy Thursday, the 28th of March, in the notorious Bull *In coena Domini*, he included Luther among the other heretics who are annually condemned anew in the same way at Rome. "In the name (so it runs) of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and by authority of the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and also our own, we do hereby denounce and curse all manner of heretics, (among whom are included the Arnoldists, Wiclefites, Hussites, and Fratricelli,) and also Martin Luther, lately condemned by us, for like heresy, together with all his adherents and such as show him favour that he may escape punishment, whoever they be, and all other heretics, as they may be named, and all their fautors, adherents, and retainers. We excommunicate and curse all pirates, all who in their territories institute new taxes or exact such as are forbidden; all who furnish horses, arms, iron or wooden work or other forbidden articles to Saracens, Turks, and other enemies of the Christian name, enabling them to contend with Christians," &c. This new anathema, however, did Luther no injury, especially as every one knew how it must be regarded by him. At a later period, he published it himself, with keen and vehement notes, pungent sarcasm and sparkling wit, under this title: "The Bull *Abendfressen*\* of our most Holy Father the Pope." At that period it was not uncommon to attack human passion and hypocrisy in religion, with these weapons of sarcasm and coarse wit; indeed

\* In allusion to the title of the bull, *in coena Domini*.



it was but a little before the appearance of this Bull that the famous painter, Lucas Kranach, published at Wittenberg a series of wood-cuts, entitled "The Passional of Christ and of Antichrist," with titles by Philip Melancthon. In general, all that Germany could then boast of poetry and art was arrayed on the side of the Reformation, and voluntarily came into its service. The two greatest masters of the imitative arts, Albert Durer and Lucas Kranach, were friends and followers of Luther, and celebrated by their productions the name of this reformer and of the chief defenders of the pure faith. In 1523, Hans Sachs, the Nuremberg minstrel, composed in honour of Luther the pleasing song which even now is everywhere familiar, under the title of the Wittenberg Nightingale.

The vehicle in which Luther travelled to Worms was given to him by the Council of Wittenberg, and drew from him a letter of courteous thanks. At Weimar, he received from Duke John a sum for his travelling expenses. At Erfurt his reception was particularly honourable. Crocus, at that time rector of the university, accompanied by Eobanus Hessen, Euricius Cordus, John Draco and others, forty being mounted and a large number on foot, received him two German miles from Erfurt, and escorted into the city the carriage or wagon in which Luther and his friends were journeying. Here and in all the streets through which the procession passed the throng became still greater. At the request of many he preached in the Augustinian convent. This entry and visit to Erfurt has been celebrated in four beautiful Latin poems by his friend Eobanus. At Eisenach he was sick. He was bled, and the mayor of the town gave him an excellent potion, after which he enjoyed a night's rest, and on the next day was able to continue his journey. Whenever he entered a town, multitudes of people met him, in order to see the brave man who had dared to withstand the pope. Some there were who gave him but poor encouragement, saying, that as there were so many cardinals and bishops at Worms, he would certainly be at once burnt to powder, as was Huss at Constance. But he replied, that if they should make a fire, between Wittenberg and Worms, that should reach up to heaven, he would nevertheless appear there, in the Lord's name, and in the jaws of Behemoth, between his very tusks, confess Christ, and recognise his dominion. From Frankfort he wrote to Spalatin, that he had heard of the promulgation of the imperial edict: "We are

coming, dear Spalatin, although Satan has laid a variety of ailments as stumbling-blocks in the way; for all the journey from Eisenach hither I have been indisposed, and am so even now, in a manner altogether unwonted. I hear likewise that a mandate of the emperor Charles has been published to alarm me. But Christ still lives, and in his name will we enter Worms, in spite of all the gates of hell, and the powers of the air. I have made up my mind to brave and to despise the devil. Prepare us a lodging forthwith.”\*

An attempt was made, by the practices of the Archbishop of Mentz, as Luther afterwards proved, to dissuade him from taking the direct road to Worms, in order that he might go to the castle of Ebernburg, and confer there with the wily Glassio. Possibly this took place in good faith, as that castle belonged to Francis of Sickingen, who in like manner sought a conference by means of Bucer. Luther, however, looked upon the worst side of the affair, being apprehensive of snares, and thought that they meant to detain him until the three remaining days of his safe-conduct should have elapsed. He therefore answered firmly, that he would go forward to the place whither he was called, and that he might be found at Worms. In Oppenheim he was counselled by Spalatin not to proceed directly to Worms, and thus place himself in so great jeopardy. But he replied to him, that he would go to Worms even if there were as many devils there as tiles upon the houses. In recounting this, a few days before his death, he added: “Thus reckless of consequences, can God make a man; I know not whether I should now be so light-hearted.”

On the 16th of April he arrived at Worms. Before the wagon rode the imperial herald with the eagle's arms, accompanied by his servant. Behind these came Justus Jonas with his academical Famulus. They were met by a number of the nobility, and at ten o'clock, when he entered the city, he was accompanied by more than two thousand men to his lodging, which was near the Swan, where Louis the Elector Palatine had his abode. In the same house with him were the Saxon Counsellors Frederick von Thunau and Philip von Feilitsch, both knights, and also Ulrich von Pappenheim the imperial marshal. This we learn from Veit Warbeek, a canon of Altenburg, who on account of his familiarity with the French language, was retained at the court of the Elec-

\* Ep. 309. De Wette. Ap. 14, 1521.—Tr.

tor Frederick; he gave an account of Luther's entry into Worms to Duke John the brother of the elector.

On the very next morning he was cited by Pappenheim, the hereditary marshal of the empire, to appear before the imperial council the same afternoon, and this gentleman himself called for him at four o'clock, and joined the herald in conducting him. So great was the throng in the streets, that many ascended the housetops to get a sight of him, and to avoid the press, they went through several houses and gardens. As Luther was about to enter the assembly-hall, the famous general George Frundsberg clapped him upon the shoulder and said: "Monkling, Monkling, thou art now on thy way to take a stand, the like of which I and many other captains have never taken in the fiercest conflicts. Now if thou art in the right, and sure of thy cause, go forward in God's name and be of good cheer, God will not forsake thee." Ulrich von Hutten had likewise encouraged him by two noble letters, inscribed "to Martin Luther, invincible theologian and evangelist, and my pious friend." The former of these opens thus: "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee; send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion; grant thee according to thine own heart and fulfil all thy counsel; hear thee from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand. For what else, at this time, should I wish for you, most worthy Luther, my honoured father? Be of good cheer; be strong. You see what a game lies before you and how much is at stake. From me you have every thing to hope. If you stand firm you shall have me by your side until my last breath." Even in the assembly of chiefs, princes, counts, barons, bishops, and other deputies, there were those who gave public expression to their sympathies. According to the account of an eye-witness, there were more than five thousand spectators, German and Italian, in the hall, and ante-chamber, and around the windows.\* On every side Luther was encouraged, to be confident and not to fear such as could only kill the body. Marshal Pappenheim (the Pappenheims became counts at a later date) reminded him that as now standing before the emperor and other dignities, he must speak nothing except as he might be questioned. John von Eck or Eckius, the official of

\* George Vogler, secretary to the Margrave of Brandenburg. *V. Mensel's Hist. lit. Mag.* 1802. I. p. 207.

Treves, then came forward, and in the name of the emperor asked whether he acknowledged for his own certain books which were pointed out as lying before him, and whether he was willing to recant their contents. Upon this, Dr. Schurf, who had been assigned to him as his advocate, cried out, that the books ought to be designated by name; and when this was done, Luther answered affirmatively to the first question, but prayed for more time to answer the second, which was allowed by the emperor. Indeed it was in the highest degree becoming to his own dignity, and that of this illustrious assembly, to evince the greatest caution, in these high and holy affairs, and utterly to exclude every thing that might betray levity, want of solemnity, or stormy passion.

As he was now summoned to a second appearance before the diet, the interest and avidity of public expectation were increased, with regard to his decisive answer. To this audience he was again conducted by the herald, about four o'clock. He was however under the necessity of standing and waiting in the midst of a great multitude, until six o'clock. At this hour the torches in the council-hall were burning. When he was at length introduced, and allowed to speak, he delivered himself in the German language as follows:

“Most serene Emperor, and you, gracious Electors, Princes and Lords; as an obedient subject I appear at the limit yesterday assigned to me, and pray, by the mercy of God, that your majesty and serene highnesses, as I hope, will graciously hear these true and righteous things. And if peradventure, from ignorance, I should withhold from any one his due title, or in other respects should exhibit an uncourtly demeanour, I crave your forbearance, inasmuch as I have never been at court, but always confined to the cloister; and of myself can offer only this, that in whatsoever has been heretofore taught and written by me in the simplicity of my heart, I have intended and sought only God’s glory, and the profit and salvation of Christian believers, to the end that they might be rightly and purely instructed.” And here he made a distinction among his books. Some there were, in which he taught correctly and in a Christian manner concerning faith and good works, his adversaries themselves being judges. These he could not revoke. Yea, said he, even the pope’s bull, hot and hasty as it is, nevertheless makes some of my books harmless, though by an unnatural and monstrous decision it denounces the same. In a second class of



works, he attacked popery and popish doctrine, which by false teaching and bad example had desolated Christendom in body and soul. For experience shows, and all pious hearts bewail, and hence no man can gainsay or dissemble it, that by the pope's law and doctrines of men, the consciences of believers have been entangled, burdened and tormented in a way the most lamentable and horrid; and their property, lands, and possessions, especially in this renowned German nation, exhausted and devoured with incredible tyranny, as indeed they continue to be devoured in the most unrighteous way up to this present hour. These books, therefore, he could not revoke, for by so doing he should strengthen tyranny and corruption. "And O," cried he, "what a tool should I thus become to hide the shame of all villany and despotism!" The third class of his books comprised those aimed at certain private persons, who presumed to defend Romish tyranny, and to falsify or suppress the godly doctrine which he had taught. In these he had sometimes evinced more heat than became his calling, yet he could not revoke even these, lest he should give occasion hereafter for the defence of every ungodly thing, and lead the way to new abomination and fury. "Nevertheless," continued he, "since I am man and not God, I can no otherwise support or defend my books than as my Lord and Master did with regard to his doctrine; who when he was examined before the high priest Annas concerning his teaching, and was smitten by one of the officers, answered: If I have spoken evil bear witness of the evil. If then the Lord, who knew that he could not err, refused not to hear testimony against his doctrine, even from a poor sorry menial, how much more should I, who am dust and ashes, easily liable to error, crave and await whatever witness may be alleged against my teaching. Therefore I pray your imperial, electoral, and princely highnesses, as also all others high or low who may be able, by the mercy of God, that you would bear witness, and prove by prophetic and apostolic Scriptures that I have erred, and when I am convinced I will be willing and ready to recant all my errors, and be the first to commit my poor writings to the flames. And here I clearly and publicly declare that I have fully considered the distress and danger, the stir and variance, which will be awakened by my doctrine, and of which I was severely reminded yesterday. And of a truth it is to me the greatest pleasure and joy to see that contention and discord arise about God's word, for this is the very

way and course and fortune of God's word. Wherefore we should well consider how wonderful are the counsels and judgments of God, lest perchance that which we pretend leads to discord and contention, should result, (if in the confidence of our own strength and wisdom we should begin by persecuting God's word) in a frightful flood of invincible peril of both bodily and spiritual misfortune and injury. And we should beware lest the reign of this famous and excellent young prince, the Emperor Charles, (in whom under God our hope rests) have not only its beginning, but its middle and end, evil and ungodly. I could much more fully explain and illustrate this point by examples from the holy Scriptures, as for instance by the case of Pharaoh, the kings of Babylon and of Israel, who involved themselves in the greatest misfortune and destruction, mainly because they thought to quiet and sustain their realms by most wise plans and counsels. For there is one who taketh the wise in their own craftiness; who removeth the mountains and they know not. Job 5: 13. 9: 5. Therefore it is needful to fear God. This, however, for the sake of brevity I now omit. And even what I say, is not from the notion that such great princes stand in need of my instruction or advice, but because I ought not and will not withhold my bounden duty from the German nation, my dear native country; and with this I do most humbly and submissively beseech your highnesses, that you will not suffer me to be disturbed without cause by my adversaries."

Thus, and at much greater length, Luther spoke in German. It was well known, however, that the emperor understood Spanish better than German, and moreover could not endure the German language, "and therefore (so Luther himself relates) as I so spake, they begged that I would repeat the same once more in Latin words; but I was sorely overheated by reason of the throng, and from standing below the princes. Then said Frederick von Thunau, If you cannot do it, Sir Doctor, that is enough. However, I repeated every word in Latin; this pleased Duke Frederick the elector exceeding well."\*

All this was uttered by Luther in the most humble and submissive maner. He elevated his voice but little in speaking, evinced no passion, but spoke courteously, modestly and

\* It is to be regarded as a mere failure of memory, when Spalatin, otherwise well-informed, says: "Luther made his speech first in Latin then in German."

discreetly throughout, but with great cheerfulness and resolution. But when the official of Treves now interposed and sharply demanded a plain direct answer, Luther replied: "Since then your highnesses demand of me a simple, unequivocal and direct answer, I will give you this, which has neither teeth nor horns; I believe neither pope nor councils alone, since it is clear as day that they have often erred, and contradicted themselves. Therefore, until I am overcome and convinced by testimony of holy Scripture, or by open, plain and clear grounds of reason, my belief is so confirmed by the passages I have produced, and my conscience so bound by the word of God, that I cannot and will not retract any thing. Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise. May God help me! Amen!"

"When I had thus spoken, (says Luther in his narrative) I was permitted to withdraw, and two persons were appointed to accompany me. Upon this a tumult was excited, and some of the nobles cried out to inquire whether I was led out under arrest; but I replied that these simply accompanied me. And so I came again to my lodging, and returned no more to the imperial council."

The cheerful confession of the truth which Luther here made in the face of the whole German empire, won him the hearts of many nobles and princes, even those who subsequently did not stand firm in professing the gospel, and also such as for other reasons had hitherto concealed their approbation. The old Duke Erich of Brunswick sent him for his refreshment a silver tankard of Eimbeck beer. Luther asked what prince it was who showed him this grace, and when he was told who it was, and that he had himself previously drunk out of the tankard, he was relieved from all suspicion, and said while he partook of it: "As Duke Erich has remembered me to-day, so may our Lord Christ remember him in his final conflict." The duke called to mind these words in his last moments, and desired Francis von Kramm, one of the pages who attended at his bedside, to strengthen him with evangelical consolation.\* It is certainly true, says the excellent Spalatin, that God honoured Doctor Martin in such manner at the diet, that he was the object of greater attention than all the princes and gentry. As long as he sojourned at Worms, his inn was full of people. Besides other counts and gentlemen, I have with my own eyes seen at his lodg-

\* Seckendorf. German, p. 354.

ings, Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, William, Duke of Brunswick, and Count William of Henneberg. And our gracious Duke Frederick, Elector of Saxony, was so full of admiration at the christian, intrepid answer of Doctor Martin, uttered both in German and Latin before his imperial majesty and the high estates of the empire, that just before supper, as he was about to retire to the bath, casting his eye on me, he gave me a sign to follow him into his closet, and when I entered, his grace said with every mark of admiration, "Well indeed has Father Martin spoken before the emperor and the estates of the empire; perhaps with too much fire."—"My noble master (adds Spalatin) was somewhat timorous; for while he certainly loved Doctor Martin, and would have suffered greatly if any evil had befallen him, and also was unwilling to offend against the truth of God, still he was not prepared to commit himself with the emperor."

We perceive how truly Luther's affairs were an object of the elector's care and attention, from certain letters which this prince wrote with his own hand, during the diet, to his brother John. In one of these, dated January 16th, and of course before Luther was cited, he says among other things, that he discerns how Luther is daily plotted against, in order that he may be put under the ban of outlawry by the pope and the emperor, and that every means was employed to get him into their power. "This," he adds, "is the work of the men who swagger in red hats, and the Romans with their retainers." He further says, that on that very day the Landgrave Philip had arrived with six hundred horsemen, many of them valiant men, and that this prince had immediately come to see him, and his father-in-law Duke George. The latter conversed in a friendly way with the elector. How his heart really stands, he adds, God only knows. On the 30th of January he writes, that Martin's affairs were in the same condition as when he had lately written, but he hoped that God's truth would eventually come to light. In another letter of March 25th, he laments the onerous business to which he was subjected, and that he spends eight or nine hours every day in the council-hall. "Doctor Martin is cited hither, but I know not whether he will come. Every thing goes on tediously and I am unable to promise much good." On the 16th of April, he writes, "I know not whether Luther will come; orders have been promulged against him;" meaning those concerning the surrender of his books. "The cardinals and bishops are sternly opposed to him; may God



turn all to the best! Would God I could render Martin some service; I should not fail so to do." On the 23d of April, when Luther had been admitted to his audience, he writes, "If it lay in my power I would gladly uphold Luther in every thing righteous. I assure you, that you would be astonished if I were to relate how I have been harassed on account of these matters. It seems that they have no other intention than to hunt him down, and drive him to extremity. Whoever betrays the least favour towards him is accounted a heretic. May God, who surely will not forsake the righteous cause, direct it for the best! Concerning his discharge I will write in my next." On the 5th of May; "Martin's affairs have come to such a pass that he must be driven into exile; it cannot be prevented; but the event is with God. If by God's help I come to you I will relate wonders. For you must know that not only Annas and Caiaphas, but also Pilate and Herod are against Luther."\*

Not long after this, further attempts were made by various persons to induce Luther to recant. Among these was the popish theologian Cochlaeus, (his true name was Löffelmann, or Löffler, and Luther often called him Rotzlöffel, or *impertinent coxcomb*); he was afterwards Luther's bitter enemy, although he made a merit of having shed tears in the greatness of his desire that the recantation should take place. There were not a few who thought that the best way of dealing with Luther, was to deny him a safe-conduct on his return.† Among these was the Elector of Brandenburg, but not only the emperor and elector Palatine, but also strange to say Duke George of Saxony, resolutely opposed this. In this controversy, Louis the elector Palatine, with whom, as Mathesius says, German tranquillity and peace were buried, fell into such a quarrel with Joachim the elector of Brandenburg, that, as Luther relates, they drew their knives. Duke George declared frankly, that the princes of Germany would never allow so gross a scandal as that a safe-conduct should be violated, at the very first diet of their emperor; that this was not consistent with ancient German honour; what one promises he must perform. This was well said, and in a princely spirit, though by one, who in other respects was a zealous foe.

It was still hoped that Luther might be influenced by pri-

\* Seckend. Weim. Arch. lat. p. 158. Germ. p. 365.

† Sleidan. l. p. 148.

vate conversation. In a conference of this nature, in which Richard, archbishop of Treves, Joachim, Elector of Brandenburg, Duke George and certain counts and imperial delegates took part, Dr. Vehus, chancellor of Baden, led the discourse; and afterwards the Elector of Treves took him into a chamber apart, where were present Cochlaeus and the official Eck. On the next day, April 25th, Vehus brought forward the same business, morning and afternoon, with Dr. Peutingger. But the Elector Frederick was unwilling that Luther should deal with these alone, and sent some of his own council. Finally the archbishop of Treves undertook the matter himself, on which occasion Luther said, that he knew no better advice than that of Gamaliel: "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it." He added, "If my work be not of God, it can endure only two or three years, but if it be of God, it cannot be overthrown." And when the elector inquired whether something could not be effected as to the recantation of certain articles, Luther answered, "Yes, gracious sir, provided they are not those which were condemned at Constance." "Those" said the elector "are the very articles I intend." "As to these," said Luther, "I cannot move, happen what may."\*

At length the desired discharge from Worms was granted to him. The official of the electorate of Treves and the emperor's private secretary explained to him, that as he had refused to yield himself to the unity of the church, notwithstanding many admonitions, their majesties must henceforth regard their character as defenders of the catholic faith; they therefore commanded him to betake himself to some place of safety, under safe conduct, within twenty-one days, and meanwhile not to disturb the people by preaching or writing. Luther answered, "As it seemed good unto the Lord so hath it happened, blessed be the name of the Lord." He further gave hearty thanks to the emperor, electors and princes of the empire, in the most humble and submissive terms, for the audience he had enjoyed, and for the safe-conduct which had been accorded to him and was now continued. For he said he had sought nothing save that the Reformation according to holy Scripture for which he had been instant in prayer, should be set on foot and completed. In all things else, he was ready to do and suffer any thing for their majesties and

\* Spalatin, I. 46.

the empire; life and death, honour and disgrace, and to count all these nothing if only he might freely declare the word of God. And finally he solemnly and respectfully recognised his entire subjection to the emperor and the realm.\*

In this manner Luther left Worms on the 26th of April, taking leave of his friends after an early meal. From Friedberg, where he arrived on the 28th, he sent back the herald who had accompanied him, being now in the Hessian territory; and gave him two letters, of which one was to the emperor, and the other to the states of the empire. In these, after a relation of all that had occurred at Worms, he laments that his doctrine had not been examined by means of the Scriptures, and renders courteous thanks for the *salvum conductum*. He concludes his letter to the emperor with these words: "These things I pray most submissively, not in my own name merely, for I am of no account, but in the name of the whole church; which has also moved me to send back this letter. For with all my heart I desire that your imperial majesty, the whole empire, and the illustrious German nation may be prosperously directed, and kept happy in the grace of God. Nor have I hitherto sought any thing but God's glory and the common salvation of all, not consulting my own profit; whether my adversaries condemned me or not. For if my Lord prayed for his enemies when he was upon the cross, how much rather ought I, with joy and trust in Christ, to be solicitous, to pray and to supplicate for your majesty, for the whole empire, and for my dear progenitors and the whole German nation, for whom I entertain every good hope, confiding in the foregoing representation."†

At his departure from Worms he was strictly commanded to forbear preaching; but he by no means consented to this condition, reserving to himself that God's word should not be bound, and that he should be free to profess and declare it. He therefore preached at Kirschfeld; where the abbot who was a Benedictine, and one of the princes of the empire, received him with extraordinary honour and even constrained him to preach, although Luther reminded him that he might thereby lose his abbacy. At Eisenach also he delivered a discourse. As he now turned aside from his course in order to visit certain friends near Salzungen, he was suddenly seized by a number of horsemen in disguise, taken

\* Spalatin, I. p. 48.

† We have, of course, preferred the original Latin letter, De Wette, vol. 1. ep. 312. date Ap. 28, 1521.

out of his wagon, set on a horse, and after a circuit of some hours in the forest, brought about eleven o'clock at night to the castle of Wartburg near Eisenach. It was here that the ancient landgraves of Thuringia had their residence. Luther soon found that his captors were kind foes, acting agreeably to a plan of the elector, and with the privity of John of Berlepsch governor at Wartburgh, and Burkhard Hund lord of Altenstein and Waltershausen.

The emperor being a young Spaniard, rather than a German, perpetually surrounded by foreigners, and practised upon by the popish legates, had sent a schedule to the diet, immediately upon Luther's audience, of the following import: "Inasmuch as Luther will not retract, the emperor following the example of his predecessors must defend the ancient faith, and the see of Rome, and pronounce a ban upon Luther and his adherents, nevertheless securing the safe conduct."\*

As the young and impetuous prince, however, acted in this matter contrary to all the precedents of the diet, and without previously collecting the suffrages of the princes, it was deemed proper to take the business into consideration. Yet this sufficiently evinced the mind of the emperor and of his advisers and what might be expected to ensue.

The Elector of Saxony, on account of indisposition, had left Worms, and a number of other princes had also departed. The emperor passed immediately into Spain, where war and insurrection required his presence.† On the 26th of May this imperial edict was published, bearing the appearance much more of a papal bull than a decree of the empire. By virtue of this, Luther (and his adherents were included) was declared to be an open heretic, under ban and outlawry, his books were prohibited, and all who should protect him were subjected to the same penalty. All his crimes are rehearsed, and his books and their theological contents reviewed. Among other things it is said, that Luther's doctrine is contrary to the doctrine of the seven sacraments, of holy matrimony, the holy eucharist, confession, priestly orders, the see of Rome, the mass, fasting and prayer, the fathers and councils. Moreover, he had written nothing but what tended to uproar, discord, war, murder, robbery, conflagration, and the total downfall of the Christian faith. For he inculcated a

\* Seckendorf. p. 355.

† Sleidan, p. 170. Robertson ii. p. 250.



licentious, self-willed life, loosed from all law, utterly brutish, —showing himself to be a licentious, self-willed and brutish man, who condemned and trampled on all laws, as he had been neither ashamed nor afraid to denounce decrees and spiritual enactments. “And, in fine, to omit the remainder of Luther’s innumerable wickednesses, he has, not like a man, but rather the evil spirit himself, in man’s form and with the assumption of a monkish cowl, gathered together sundry gross, long-hidden and condemned heresies of many heretics, into one stinking pool, and added to these others of his own invention; and all this under pretext of preaching that faith which he uses his utmost labour to impair, and under the name and guise of evangelical doctrine to overturn and suppress all evangelical peace, love and good order.” It was also said, that the powers now convened at Worms had agitated the subject with the greatest care, and with the clearest determination had concurred in this decision.\* But in reality the diet had been already dissolved with all formality before this edict saw the light. The subsequent meetings of those who adhered to it were held not in the council-hall, but in the emperor’s private chamber. They moreover appended to the edict the date of May 8, to cause a belief that the assembled electors, princes, and states of the empire had taken part in it. That this could never have been the case, is plain enough from the nature of the transaction, and still more from the unfavourable reception which the edict met almost throughout all Germany, even before the ink with which it was written was dry, as the cardinal Julius de Medici, afterwards Pope Clement VII. expressed himself. Sleidan says explicitly, that it was the work of a few.† The contents and temper of the instrument may be judged by any one who is informed that it was drafted by Aleander.‡ He had here expressed and made public, as if officially, all the venom which had been boiling in his breast. For what though a league of more than four hundred nobles (as Pallavicini relates) was formed for Luther, or that the troops of Francis of Sickingen were in readiness, or that Hartmuth of Kronenberg, one of the most accomplished cavaliers of the age, had in utter disgust renounced his service to the emperor, which had brought him in two hundred ducats; still as this imperial-papal edict exactly reached the end of setting the Ger-

\* Luth. Op. XV. 2264.

† Sleidan, p. 163.

‡ Sarpi Hist. du Cone. de Trente. ed. le Courayer. I. 35.

man princes with their people at variance among themselves, it accomplished precisely what Aleander had intended and declared: "Even though you Germans choose to cast off the Roman yoke, we shall nevertheless effect such a havoc in Germany by this edict, that you will tear one another to pieces, and be strangled in your own blood."\* It was not, as Frederick Schlegel says,† Luther's appearance at the diet, but the manner in which he was treated, that gave the first occasion for the dissolution of the German empire, and the disruption of the German people, which of necessity took place afterwards. At this diet there was seen no vestige of ancient German freedom, and of the laudable institution which made such diets truly national councils; for in order that it might not consist of mere secular lords and stupid dunces, there sat in the princes' council, archbishops, bishops and abbots.‡ But it was their duty to consult for the well-being of church and state in the German empire, and seriously and intelligently to discuss religious affairs. Even if this was not the proper time for disputation, yet both time and place were in the highest degree proper for considering the spiritual and eternal welfare of the German states, connected as for centuries this had been with their external prosperity. From the tenor of the imperial writs it had been expected that these religious affairs would constitute a leading topic of the discussions; for the words of the emperor imported that the diet was convened almost solely for this end. But now at length this edict was fabricated at the very close, as something supplementary; it was done in darkness, in a partial manner, and by few persons, and was then promulgated as the decision of the diet. "What grief has been experienced," says Ulrich von Hutten in a frank epistle to the noble counsellor Pirkheimer of Nuremberg, "by every German heart, at the wretched issue of this diet. His refusal to retract, is enough, it seems, to subject this man of God to extreme condemnation. Blessed God! where will these things end! I truly believe that it will now be made apparent, whether Germany is governed by princes, or by

\* Seckend. lat. I. p. 158. Eia, si nihil adeo praeclare his Comitibus effecimus, tamen certum est, nos magnam hoc edicto in Germania laniationem concitare, qua Alemanni, ipsi in viscera sua saevientes propediem in proprio sanguine suffocantur. Scult. Annal. I. p. 75.

† Vorlesungen u. d. neuere Geschichte.

‡ Besides the emperor and the archduke Ferdinand, there were 6 electors who were also prelates, 24 dukes, 8 margraves, 30 bishops, &c.

well-dressed stocks. For the ecclesiastics determine nothing in Luther's case, but superlative wickedness and villany. Over Luther's last letter to me, I could do nothing but weep, when I read how unjustly he had been treated. Among other things, this was one, that he received his discharge under a command not to preach the word of God on his way home. O abominable outrage! O crime demanding the remediless wrath of God! thus to trammel God's word, and to stop the mouth of an evangelical teacher. Look to this, ye Christian princes! What will foreign countries say of this? I blush for the land of my fathers."\*

In the preface to the Exposition of the 37th Psalm, Luther himself speaks thus concerning the transactions at Worms. "What a mockery have they introduced! I had hoped that the doctors and bishops there present would have given me a righteous examination; instead of this, the sole judgment was that I must recant. Through God's grace, this proposal was not agreed to by all the princes and nobles, or I should have been mortally ashamed of Germany, that she should have yielded herself to be thus befooled by the popish tyranny." He also wrote to Master Lucas Kranach, the artist, then at Wittenberg: "I supposed that his imperial majesty would have convened some fifty doctors, and have clearly refuted the monk. Instead of this, the whole transaction was no more than this, *Are the books thine?—Yes.—Wilt thou recant or not?—No.—Away with thee.* Alas for us blind Germans!"† And further to Spalatin: "It is no wonder that Charles is involved in war. The unhappy young man, who at Worms, at the instigation of evil counsellors, openly rejected the truth, will never more have prosperity, and will receive his punishment in the wickedness of foreigners; he will also involve Germany in his disaster, since she concurred in his ungodliness. But the Lord knoweth them that are his."

\* Luth. Works, XV. p. 2322.

† Luth. Works, XV. p. 2173.

ART. V.—*The Library of Christian Knowledge.* Edited by the Rev. Herman Hooker, A. M. Author of “The Portion of the Soul.”

*Subian Alexander*

FOUR volumes of this series have appeared, and if we may consider these as a specimen of the work we congratulate the Christian public on the prospect of being supplied from time to time, with a rich feast of evangelical matter, calculated to give nourishment and refreshment to the spiritual life of believers.

M'Laurin's *Essays* is not a recent work, but the lapse of years can never destroy its value. While the observations of the author are strictly orthodox, they are philosophical, and if read with candour and attention, must have a powerful effect in correcting mistakes and expelling prejudices where they have been imbibed, and in enlightening the mind, and invigorating the faith of the sincere Christian. We would strongly recommend the perusal and re-perusal of these essays to the young theologian. Too great a proportion of time, we fear, is spent by the young ministers of our day in light reading, which while it gratifies a prurient curiosity has no tendency to strengthen the mind. The effect produced is superficial knowledge, and a distaste for deep and solid research. Religious people are now distinguished for bustling activity and a show of benevolence and zeal, but there exists a sad deficiency of profound and systematic knowledge even in those who have enjoyed the advantages of a liberal education.

The second of these volumes, “*Goode's Better Covenant,*” is a late production, and is the work of a very sound evangelical minister of the established church of England. Both the doctrines and the spirit of the author forcibly remind us of the writings of the doctors of this church in the days of queen Elizabeth, when Calvinism was so far from being a discredit to the minister who held it, that no other doctrine was tolerated in the church; and Calvin's *Institutes* was the text-book from which candidates for the ministry in the church derived their theology, and his commentaries, the grand treasury to which they had continual recourse. This volume cannot be read by the pious without sensible profit. It breathes the very spirit of ardent piety, and directs continually to CHRIST, as the only source of strength and growth



in grace. The kind of faith here inculcated, is not a cold rational assent to general propositions, but a cordial, living principle of action, the exercise of which is commonly accompanied with a sweet persuasion of pardon and acceptance. Nothing animates and encourages the pious soul in its spiritual pilgrimage so much, as the smiles of the great Captain of salvation. Assurance of the divine favour, though not the essence, may be said to be the life and comfort of faith. Too great a prevalence of a legal, self-righteous spirit, is certainly one of the greatest hinderances to the vigour and consolations of piety. It is truly delightful to see a return, in a large number of the ministers of the established church of England, to the true doctrines of her excellent Articles, and to the evangelical faith which so eminently characterized her primitive members. Whatever may become of her alliance with the state, a church which has in her bosom hundreds of such ministers as Mr. Goode, cannot be in danger of being overthrown.

We are pleased to find that Mr. Hooker is disposed to devote himself to the work of preparing useful works for the American press. We do not know any way by which a judicious and pious man can render himself more useful, and we hope that no circumstance will arise to discourage him in this good work.

*Letters Practical and Consolatory, designed to illustrate the Nature and Tendency of the Gospel.* By the Rev. David Russell, D. D. author of "A survey of the Old and New Covenants;" "A View of the Adamie and Mediatorial Dispensations." With an Introductory Essay, by the Rev. Henry A. Boardman, Philadelphia.

We are much gratified that the theological writings of the Rev. Doctor Russell of Dundee, begin to attract the attention of American readers. The editor could not easily have hit upon a work better adapted to instruct and comfort the pious reader, than these small volumes of letters. They are, we think, the best productions of the gifted author's pen. They appear to have been written in the course of a real correspondence, which gives them a greater freedom of style than could easily be attained in letters originally intended for the press. Though the letters are practical, and particularly suited to afford rich consolation to the children of sorrow, they are nevertheless eminently instructive. There are few books from which a clearer idea can be obtained of the doctrines of the Christian system than from these Letters.

They contain, as do his other writings, the pure gospel of Jesus Christ. The peculiar excellency of these volumes is, that you have the truth exhibited, not in a controversial or even a systematic form, but in its practical bearings, both as a guide to faith and practice. The style is clear, concise, and easy; and possesses a vivacity which keeps up the interest of the reader. Some idea of the work may be formed from the bare mention of the subjects of some of the letters. The first is "On the sufferings of Christ;" a delightful and edifying discourse, which cannot be perused without a salutary effect. The second is "On the Glory of Christ;" which possesses excellence similar to the first. The third is "On the Invitations and Promises of the Gospel." This is a very important letter, in which the true nature of gospel invitations and gospel promises is clearly exhibited, and the common mistakes of serious persons corrected. The fourth letter is "On the Law and Gospel." The view here given is purely evangelical. He insists that the law should be clearly and pointedly preached to convince men of their sin and danger, and to drive them from their false refuges and self-righteousness. But while he would have the law so wielded as to wound the soul and slay its false hopes, he directs that the gospel be constantly preached in its fulness and freeness, and sinners invited and urged to come at once without delay to the outstretched arms of mercy. Faith he represents as the vital principle of practical religion, and teaches that our persons must be accepted, before we can hope for the acceptance of our services; and that obedience is yielded, not to obtain forgiveness, but as an expression of gratitude for having obtained it. The fifth is "On Christian Comfort." The sixth, "On the Practical Influence of the Truth." And the seventh, "On Sanctification." The subjects treated in the remaining part of the first volume are, "The Perseverance of Christians—The Divine Purposes as exhibited in Scripture—The Benefit of Affliction," &c. &c.

The letters composing the second volume are not less important nor less interesting than those in the first. Much of the volume is occupied with the consideration of the important subject of a sinner's justification before God; and of faith as the medium or instrument of justification. The views of the author on this momentous subject are clear and evangelical. They are worthy of the purest ages of Christian theology, and yet in style and manner they are well adapted to the present age. We could scarcely direct our readers to any book from which they would gain more satis-

faction in relation to the true gospel-ground of a sinner's pardon, acceptance, and peace with God. And these letters are the more valuable, because in many of the popular treatises on practical religion recently published, the subject of a sinner's justification before God is either entirely omitted, or presented in a light so obscure or erroneous, that the serious inquirer is much more likely to be misled, than guided in the path of life. The true nature and office of a justifying faith is also here exhibited in a just and satisfying manner.

Besides the letters which relate to faith and justification, which occupy a considerable part of this volume, there are others of a highly interesting and consolatory nature. The sixteenth and seventeenth, "On the best method of instructing inquirers," contain precisely such advice as should be given to all who are seriously seeking the salvation of their souls. They direct the sinner to look at once to a crucified Christ. They carefully guard him against trusting, in any degree, to his own duties; and yet he is urged to the use of appointed means. The common errors and mistakes under which awakened souls often labour are clearly pointed out, and the richness and freeness of the grace of the gospel are exhibited in a very pleasing manner.

The concluding letters of this volume will be found of the same excellence as the preceding. The subjects are "On the maintenance of Christian confidence," which is an admirable letter; "On the Lord's Supper," which is judicious and affectionate. The last two letters, "On the Contemplation of the Heavenly Temple," and "The Heavenly Sabbath," bring this delightful and instructive volume to a suitable close. If our recommendation could have the desired effect, it should make a part of every family library in the country. It is in our opinion a book eminently calculated to promote correct doctrinal views, and at the same time, advance the cause of practical religion. And we think that if the American Tract Society would consent to add the whole of these letters, or a selection from them, to their family library, its value would be not a little increased.

We cannot dismiss this subject without expressing our gratification upon the perusal of the sensible and judicious preliminary Discourse prefixed to these Letters by the Rev. Mr. Boardman, of Philadelphia. When we contemplate the influence of the press on public sentiment, and how much is published which has a tendency to corrupt the public mind,

we feel disposed to hail every fellow-labourer, who by education and talents is qualified to write in an instructive manner: and as writing is an art in which men commonly improve in some ratio to their practice, we rejoice to find a young man disposed to come forward as a coadjutor in the propagation and defence of evangelical truth. We know that Mr. Boardman's sentiments are sound, and as he has rapidly risen to eminence as a preacher, we are of opinion that he is capable of rendering effective service to the church by his pen. If his bodily health should for a while disqualify him for the labours of the pulpit, we hope that he will feel the obligation of making use of the press for the benefit of the church and the world.

#### POPULAR INFIDELITY.

Since we began to write our notice of the above-mentioned volumes, we have received the fifth volume of the series; an entirely original work from the pen of the editor. This volume has the impress of deep thought and great spirituality. Mr. Hooker is undoubtedly a writer of no small degree of originality, and his style is often very beautiful; but there is a refinement and obscurity in his composition, which we fear will prevent his book from being read and duly appreciated by that class of persons for whose improvement it was especially intended. The great defect, we think, is the want of prominent points in the work. There is no doubt a real thread of connexion between the several parts, but it will scarcely be perceptible to superficial readers. The sentiments throughout appear to be correct and evangelical, and we should be pleased to furnish to our readers some specimens of what we consider excellent writing, but the want of room forbids us to make extracts. As Mr. Hooker is a young author, we would recommend it to him to endeavour to bring his excellent matter before the public in a more pointed and palpable form; to seize with a strong grasp the more important points and bearings of his subject, even if it should be at the sacrifice of those minor beauties with which his style abounds.

While we are pleased to observe the zeal and diligence which have led Mr. Hooker to compose a volume of this size, we are not altogether satisfied respecting the judiciousness of the resolution to insert in this series a new, and consequently unknown work. We think before a volume is admitted into "The Library of Christian Knowledge," it should



have passed with full approbation the ordeal of criticism, so as by common consent, to be admitted to a place among the standard works of evangelical piety.

It is our sincere wish that Mr. Hooker and his publisher may receive such encouragement in conducting this useful enterprise, that they may go on to furnish the reading public with a large number of valuable standard works in every department of Christian knowledge, which are now not accessible to them, or only obtained with difficulty. We know not any way in which more good can be accomplished than by the publication and circulation of religious books. And while we approve of publishing such volumes in a series, so as to make up a library, we think it important that each volume should be sold separately also.

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ART. VI.—*The Life of Augustine.*

*J. A. Alexander*

AURELIUS AUGUSTINUS, called in English, Austin or Augustine, was born at Tageste in Numidia, Nov. 13, 354. This place was not far from Hippo, but at so great a distance from the sea, that he never saw it until he was grown up. His parents were not rich, but lived in affluence. His father Patricius was an idolater, and of a choleric temper; but his mother Monica was a Christian, and distinguished for meekness and humility; by the example of which her husband was at length won over to the faith, and was baptized shortly before his death. Their son, even in his early youth, fell into a gulf of iniquity, of which he has in his "confessions" given a lively description, in order to confess and deplore his blindness and ingratitude to God; and to set forth the infinite riches of sovereign grace; and to stand as a warning and example to those who should come after him. He was not baptized in infancy, because the opinion was then entertained, that the stain of sins committed after the reception of this sacrament could not be readily washed out. When a boy, however, he was once very sick, and his mother got every thing ready for his baptism; but he suddenly grew better, and the ceremony was deferred. This practice of deferring baptism he afterwards freely condemned.

His father perceiving that his son had a remarkable appetite for learning, spared no pains in his education. But he

confesses how much he neglected the means of improvement which he enjoyed, through a sinful love of play; and says, that almost the only motive which stimulated him to any degree of diligence, was the dread of punishment from his teachers, against which he prayed most earnestly. He complains of the austerity of his pedagogues, and laments that they did not attempt to lead him on by more generous motives.

He freely confesses his early pride and ambition and speaks of his inordinate love of praise; but he soon began to be carried away by love of the diversions of the theatre. He expresses in relation to the sins of his youth the interesting truth, that God justly turns sin into its own chastisement; its pleasure always leaving a sting, and filling the mind with gall and bitterness. "For," says he, "Thou hast ordained it, that every inordinate affection should be to itself its own punishment and torment."

Having learned Latin from his nurses, when a child, he was always pleased with reading that language; but when a boy, he had a great aversion to the rules of grammar, and especially to the Greek language. With the story of Æneas he was deeply interested, and could weep at the sorrow of Dido, while he had no tears for his own sins. The reading of such works, however, was very useful in exercising, enlarging, and elevating his mind. Attention to accuracy must, in his days, have been great, as he says many scholars would rather have been guilty of a great crime, than of a solecism in discourse. And he acknowledges, in regard to himself, that he preferred deceiving his master by lies, or envying his school-fellows, to letting slip any impropriety in his speech. He also confesses that he was often guilty of theft in stealing things out of his parent's cellar to gratify his gluttony. On one occasion he and his companions stole some pears from a neighbour's tree, through mere wantonness: for when they had taken the fruit they threw it to the hogs. He speaks in a feeling manner of the seductions of bad company; but the vice into which he particularly fell, was that of impurity. As early as his sixteenth year he plunged into this gulf. He attributes it to the reading of plays, frequenting stage amusements, idleness, and the influence of bad company.

After pursuing elementary studies in his own town, he was put to school at Madaura, a neighbouring city, where he studied grammar, poetry, and rhetoric. When he had

reached his sixteenth year, his father recalled him, with a view of sending him to Carthage to finish his education. But probably thinking him too young to be sent to so populous a city, he kept him at home for one whole year. During this time he slighted the godly admonitions of his mother, and fell into the crime of lewdness, owing very much to idleness and his father's injudicious indulgence. His ardour in every sport was amazing; and now he devoted much time to catching birds, in the pursuit of which he endured incredible fatigues. He confesses that he was ashamed to be thought less flagitious than others. "When I heard them boasting of their licentious conduct," says he, "I had a mind to do the same."

He went to Carthage in the commencement of his seventeenth year, A. D. 370. There he soon rose to the foremost rank in the school of rhetoric, and was so eager in his application to his studies, that he could with difficulty be drawn away from them. But he confesses that he was actuated by no higher motives than vanity and ambition; yet he says he could never imitate the arrogance of some who made it their sport to deride others, especially strangers, to gratify a malicious mirth. One of his greatest enemies, Vincent, acknowledges that he was always distinguished for decency of manners; but Augustine confesses that it was merely an external decency; for with all his polished manners, he was at this time immersed in the filth of impurity. This fire of lust, he assures us, was kept alive and inflamed by an attendance on theatrical amusements. In 371 his father died, shortly after he had been baptized; but Augustine continued his studies at Carthage.

Cicero was a favourite author, and among others he read his Hortensius, which is now lost, and which was an exhortation to the study of philosophy. This work produced a powerful effect on his mind, inflaming him with an ardent love of wisdom, and inspiring him with a contempt for riches and honours. From that time he laid aside all pursuit of magistracies and high preferments. As he heard Aristotle much commended, he got the book and read his ten categories, and understood it all without a master. At length, however, he began to grow weary of heathen authors, and even of Cicero's Hortensius, because in them no mention is made of Christ, whose name he had been accustomed to hear from his infancy; for his mother's early instructions had left an indelible impression on his mind. He now, therefore, began to desire

to read the Holy Scriptures; but having been so long accustomed to the flowers of rhetoric, he found fault with the simplicity of style in the sacred books; and being puffed up with pride, he could not relish the humility and spirituality there enjoined. Indeed a course of licentious indulgence always has a degrading effect on the mind, however strong the intellect, and renders it incapable of relishing the spiritual beauties and joys which true religion affords. Not only so, but such vices prepare the way for the reception of the most unreasonable and dangerous errors. The truth of these remarks was now verified in the experience of Augustine; for he fell under the corrupting influence of Manichaeism, in which he continued eight or nine years. He attributes his fall very much to pride and self-confidence. The Manichees flattered his vanity and soothed his self-love. They pretended to bring all their tenets to the test of pure reason, and set at nought the authority of the church, as calculated to shackle the human mind in its free inquiries. They promised to demonstrate all their principles, and professed that all mystery was banished from their system, and that faith was nothing but weakness and ignorance. That Augustine was fascinated by these views of the sufficiency of human reason, is clear from what he afterwards wrote to his friend Honoratus, who was still entangled in the meshes of the Manichaean web. "You know, Honoratus," says he, "that upon no other ground we adhered to these men. What else caused me for nine years, rejecting the religion which was instilled into me in my childhood, to follow these men, but their professing that we were the slaves of superstition, and that the church obtruded on us tenets without assigning any reason: whereas, they alleged, that they required no one to believe any thing but after thorough examination, and upon the clearest conviction. Who would not have been inveigled by such promises; especially, a young man thirsting for knowledge, already held in reputation in the schools, and lifted up with pride and self-confidence?" And in other parts of his writings, he often remarks, that it was the common artifice of all heretics to deride the simple faith of Christians, to make a display of science, and to boast that they were only governed by the light of reason. Still, however, the Manichees were unable to satisfy his doubts, respecting many points; especially, in regard to the origin of evil; he, therefore, was never admitted into the number of their *elect*, but remained in the class of hearers. His pride and vanity were,



however, often gratified by his success in disputing with catholics; and he was instrumental in bringing over several of his intimate friends; among whom was Alipius, and his patron Rominianus, in whose house he lived at Carthage.

Though only twenty years of age, Augustine determined to relieve his mother, whose income was not large, from the burden of supporting him any longer; he, therefore, returned to Tageste, and set up a school of grammar and rhetoric. His mother had such an abhorrence of the tenets of the Manichees, that she ceased not to weep and pray for his conversion; and hoping that it might have a salutary effect on him, she would not eat at the same table with him. Finding her own efforts to reclaim him ineffectual, she went to a bishop of her acquaintance, and entreated him to expostulate with her son; but he declined it for the present, saying that he was unfit to receive instruction; that he was so inflated with a conceit of his own abilities, having confounded in dispute several who encountered him, and so intoxicated with the novelty of his heresy, that any attempt to convince him of his error, while in this state of mind, would be ineffectual. At the same time he comforted Monica by saying, "Pray to our Lord for him; your son will at length discover his error and impiety." But when she continued to weep and beseech him to do something to reclaim her unhappy son, he dismissed her, saying, "Go your way: God bless you; it cannot be that a child of so many tears should perish:" which words she received as an oracle from heaven. She also derived comfort from a dream, in which she seemed to see a young man, who asked her the reason of her daily tears and sorrow, and bade her be of good courage, for where she was, there was her son also; upon which looking about she saw Augustine standing upon the same plank with herself. She seems, therefore, to have taken up an assurance that her son would be hereafter converted; though her faith was put to a severe trial by delay, and by the profligate course which he pursued.

Augustine had a dear friend, who was his constant companion in all his studies, and whom he seduced into the errors of the Manichees. This young man being seized with a dangerous sickness, renounced his errors, was converted to the orthodox faith, and was baptized. He recovered, however, and when Augustine rallied him on what had taken place in his sickness, his friend with an unexpected freedom, requested him never again to address him in that strain, say-

ing, that if he did, he should avoid him, and regard him as an enemy. Soon afterwards this young man relapsed into the same disorder, which now terminated fatally; but he died in faith. Augustine was much affected with this loss, and for a time was overwhelmed with grief. Wherever he turned his eyes, he seemed to see his image; and death stared him in the face almost perpetually; so that his own house and even his country were filled with horror. He appeared to be sinking into a state of confirmed melancholy, and was inconsolable for the loss of his dearest friend, and could no longer bear to remain in his native place, where every object brought him to his remembrance. He therefore transferred his residence to Carthage, where time and new connexions gradually wore away his grief. Ambition and vanity as well as grief had probably a share in this change of place. Carthage, as being the capital of all Africa, presented a much more conspicuous theatre for the display of his abilities, than a small country town. Here he opened a school of rhetoric, and entered into personal competition in the theatres, for the prizes which were offered for the best specimens of poetry and oratory, which he commonly carried off. About this time, he also applied himself for a while, to the study of judicial astrology; but he was soon cured of this folly. When about twenty-six or seven years of age, he wrote two or three books *De Pulchro et Aplo*, concerning what is beautiful and becoming; which works are lost.

He began to be somewhat dissatisfied with the Manichean account of the creation of the world, the elements, and the heavenly bodies: and understanding that a Manichean bishop of wonderful learning was expected at Carthage, he became very impatient to see him; hoping that he would solve all his doubts. This was the celebrated Faustus, whom he found to be an eloquent man, but no better at explaining difficulties than other Manichees.

Finding himself disappointed in obtaining satisfaction from this man, so much celebrated among them, he began to think of renouncing his connexion with the sect; and feeling no desire to return to the catholic church, he did not know which way to turn; but determined that for the present he might as well stay where he was; until he should meet with something more satisfactory.

While in this unsettled state of mind, Augustine determined to leave Carthage, where his pupils by their irregularities gave him much trouble, and go to Rome. This reso-

lution he adopted without the knowledge of his mother; who when she heard of it redoubled her prayers for his conversion. When he came to Rome, he lodged in the house of a Manichee, more for the sake of old acquaintance than any present attachment to that sect. Soon after his arrival at Rome he was brought near to the gates of death by a violent disease. On this subject he has some very solemn reflections in his Confessions: "For whither had I gone, had I then died," says he, "but into those flames and torments which my sins deserved?" But it pleased God to raise him up, doubtless as he supposed, in answer to the unceasing prayers of his mother. While he professed rhetoric in this metropolis of the world, he was attended by many of the most distinguished wits of the age, who always went away with admiration of his learning and abilities, rendered more amiable by the natural suavity of his temper. But being frequently defrauded of his fees by the inconstancy and caprice of his pupils, who ran from one teacher to another, he accepted an invitation to go and teach rhetoric at the city of Milan, where the emperor Valentinian then held his court. Here he was received with great applause, and was held in high estimation by the most ingenious men of the place; and by none more so than Ambrose. Augustine felt a strong desire to become acquainted with this great man, not as a religious teacher, for he had no faith in the doctrines of the church, but as a scholar and an orator: and he frequently attended on his sermons, merely out of curiosity, or to witness his display of eloquence. Upon a comparison of his delivery with that of Faustus the Manichee, he gave the preference to the latter; but he could not but perceive that Ambrose had much more solidity and learning. And the more he listened to his powerful discourses, the more reason did they seem to possess; so that he was convinced that the Manichees derided the law and the prophets very unjustly. Still he remained unconvinced of the truth of the catholic doctrines, though he was fully sensible that they were misrepresented by the Manichæan teachers. While thus in pursuit of worldly fame, riches, and high offices, his mind was often torn with indescribable anxieties; so that on a certain occasion, when he had to deliver a panegyric on the emperor, for the success of which he was very solicitous, as he passed through the street he envied the happiness of a poor beggar, whom he saw laughing and merry, and said to his friends, "What torments our own folly creates only to purchase

what we can never attain." His thoughts were now much exercised about deep and abstruse subjects, especially respecting the origin of evil. He found it very difficult to conceive of God as a pure spirit without any corporeal extension; for under the teaching of the Manichees, he had been accustomed to the gross idea, that the substance of the Deity was extended throughout the universe. From the account which he gives of the state of his mind while perplexed with these abstruse subjects, his feelings must have been intensely painful: but he received some light from the perusal of the writings of Plato, and some other philosophers of the same school, who speak clearly and sublimely of the ETERNAL WORD and of incorporeal substances. He began now to *feel* the necessity of acknowledging God to be an eternal, infinite, incomprehensible, unchangeable being, and a most pure and perfect spirit; and that in the creation there is nothing absolutely evil. But though he derived some light from the Platonic philosophers, he found their doctrines generated in him pride and not humility; and while they led him to think himself wise they left him to feel his own punishment; they pointed out no remedy for the diseases and miseries of human nature. He found nothing in them about the great mystery of man's redemption, or Christ's incarnation; he was therefore led to peruse the writings of the New Testament, and especially Paul's epistles, with unspeakable eagerness and delight. Here he found the testimonies of the Old Testament admirably illustrated, the glory of heaven displayed, and the way which leads thither clearly delineated. He there read the description of the "law in the members" warring against the law of the mind, and that nothing could deliver him from this body of death, but the grace of Jesus Christ. He was now convinced of the excellence of the Christian religion as held by the catholic church; but his prejudices were still so strong against many things, that he was kept back from seeking an entrance into it. Under these difficulties, he applied to Simplician, a priest of Milan, whom Damasus, bishop of Rome, had formerly sent to instruct Ambrose, and who was then beloved by him as his father, and afterwards succeeded him in the bishopric of Milan. This holy man had already reached a very advanced age, and had been pious from his youth. Simplician gave him a particular narrative of the conversion of Victorinus, a famous professor of rhetoric at Rome, by whom the works of the Platonics which Augustine had read with profit, were translated into Latin, and by



whom most of the Roman senators had been instructed in rhetoric. This old man became fully convinced of the truth of the Christian religion by the instructions of Simplician, but for some time was deterred from coming to baptism, through fear of offending the Roman senators, his friends, who were still devoted to idolatry. At length, by the exhortations and reasonings of his spiritual guide, he was made willing to renounce the honour which comes from man, and to take up his cross and follow Christ, and therefore came forward and assumed the profession of a Christian. Simplician, moreover, informed Augustine, that when Julian the Apostate forbade the Christians to teach the sciences, Victorinus quitted his school cheerfully, being now made willing to suffer reproach and persecution for Christ's sake. There was something, in this case, remarkably adapted to Augustine's situation and state of mind, and he was in no small degree affected by the narrative; especially, when he learned that he died in the Christian faith. But still, though he longed for deliverance, he was held fast bound, as he says, "not with exterior chains, but by his own iron will. The enemy," says he "held my will, and of it he made a chain, with which he had fettered me fast; for from a perverse will was created wicked desire, and obeying this lust produced custom, and habit once fixed, produced a kind of necessity, with which as with certain links closely connected I was kept shackled in cruel slavery. I had now no excuse as formerly, when I disbelieved the truth, for now I was convinced of it, but was still fettered."

It happened, that one Pontitianus, who held an honorable employment in the emperor's court, and was a very religious man, came one day to pay a visit to Augustine and his friend Alipius. Finding Paul's epistles lying on the table, he began to speak to them of Anthony and other ascetics, who had entirely forsaken the world, and devoted themselves to the exercises of devotion. He also discoursed largely of the excellence of the virtue of chastity, in illustration of which he told them several striking anecdotes, and agreeably to the notions then in vogue, he exceedingly extolled a life of virginity, as by far the most perfect. This discourse of Pontitianus made a deep impression on the mind of Augustine. He had, in his former desires for conversion, sometimes prayed for the gift of continence, but with a secret reserve, not wishing that his prayer should be answered too soon. The language of his heart was something like this, "Give me chastity and continence, but not yet." But after this con-

versation with Pontitianus, he became strongly agitated, and expressed his feelings to his friend Alipius in language of the most pathetic kind. They went out, and sat down together in the garden, where the conflict of Augustine's feelings was, according to his own account, tremendous. "I was," says he, "enraged at myself, that I did not at once resolve on what I was convinced to be right. I would and I would not. I was, as it were, divided between myself and myself. I shook my chain with which I was fettered, but could not release myself from it." The pleadings of long-indulged lust on the one side, and the angry remonstrances of an awakened conscience on the other, held him in long and painful suspense. Wishing to be entirely alone he now withdrew from his friend to a distance, and there throwing himself down on the ground under a fig tree, he gave vent to his agonized feelings in a torrent of tears, and with an earnest voice cried unto God, "O Lord, wilt thou be angry for ever? Remember not my past iniquities." Then he expostulated with himself and reproached himself, saying, "How long? How long? To-morrow—to-morrow. Why not now? Why does not this hour put an end to my filthiness?" As he uttered these complaints he wept with bitter contrition of heart, when on a sudden, he heard the voice of a child from a neighbouring house, singing out with frequent repetitions, these two words, "TOLLE LEGE, TOLLE LEGE:" that is, "take up and read," "take up and read." He began now to consider, whether ever before he had heard children in play sing such words, and he was unable to recollect any instance. He was strongly impressed with the idea, that this was a divine admonition to read in the New Testament; and having left Paul's epistles where his friend was sitting, he returned thither in haste, caught up the book, and reading the first sentence which met his eyes, the following were the words: "Not in rioting and drunkenness; not in chambering and wantonness; not in strife and envying: but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." He marked the place; he shut the book; he seemed in a moment to be delivered from his former darkness and hesitation; he was enabled to determine with confidence to forsake his licentious course of life. He then with calmness and a serene countenance, related to his friend what had been passing in his mind: and Alipius, when he had read the passage which had produced such an effect on Augustine's mind, proceeded to read the next following

words: "He that is weak in the faith receive ye," which he applied to himself, and therefore, being of a sweet disposition, and religiously inclined, he did not hesitate to unite with his friend in his good resolution.

It ought to have been mentioned before, that Monica, the mother of Augustine, had followed him to Italy, as soon as she heard that he had abandoned the Manichees; and was now residing in Milan. The first thing, therefore, which occurred to Augustine was to communicate to his pious mother, a change which he knew would so much delight her, and for which she had been praying night and day so many years. His conversion occurred in the year 386, after which he retired to a country house near Milan, accompanied by his mother; where he strenuously laboured by prayer and fasting and watchfulness against the evils of his own heart, and the temptations of the world. He wept over his sins and endeavoured continually to disengage his affections from the creature, and to prepare himself to lead a new life in Christ. But his whole confidence of success was in God. His prayer to God was, "My whole hope is in nothing else, but in thy exceeding great mercy, O Lord my God—Give me what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt." He particularly prayed for purity of heart and for perfect divine love; feeling that he was under obligations to devote his whole soul to God and he desired to redouble his exertions to redeem, if it had been possible, the precious time he had lost. The expressions of ardent desire and impassioned love were now of the strongest kind; fulfilling the words of our Lord, who declares that "to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much." On this account, painters have given to this saint the symbol of a flaming heart. Against no sin did he watch more assiduously, than against the risings of pride and vain glory; he also laboured to govern his tongue, his eyes and other senses, especially his taste, with the strictest care. To drunkenness he had never been addicted, but he prays fervently against gluttony or excess in the pleasures of the table as one into which he was in danger of sliding. The desire of riches seemed now completely mortified; but lust, which had held him in bondage so long, still gave him trouble; and he found no effectual relief, but in casting himself into the arms of the divine mercy, imploring divine help, and in the tears of true penitence. The work of grace appears to have made rapid progress in the mind of Augustine; for he became daily more and more humble under a sense of his

own vileness. At this time he read the book of Psalms with unspeakable interest; and burned with desire to recite them all the world over, if it had been possible.

The time now drew near when he must enter his name among the candidates for holy baptism; he returned therefore to Milan from his seclusion, in the year 387, and on the eve of Easter, was baptised by Ambrose, together with his friend Alipius, and his son Adeodatus. This youth was the fruit of his illicit connexion with a concubine before he left Africa, and was now about fifteen years of age. After his baptism all his distress respecting the sins of his past life seemed to be removed, and he obtained a settled peace of conscience.

Having resolved, with his mother, to return to Africa, he left Milan and went to Rome, where he remained four or five months; and thence going to Ostia, to embark for his native country, his beloved mother Monica was there taken sick and died, in November, 387. In consequence of this heavy affliction he returned to Rome, where he remained nearly a whole year. In 388 he passed over to Carthage, where he remained only a short period. His desire was to be in retirement; and accordingly he spent three years almost entirely in the exercises of devotion, and in the study of the Sacred Scriptures. As he wished to be free from worldly cares, he gave up his paternal estate at Tageste to the church; reserving no more than a small annual allowance for the maintenance of himself and son. He now collected together a number of brethren, who lived together in common; and this was the origin of the order long famous in the church by the name of "The Hermits of St. Austin," of which fraternity Martin Luther was a member. In this age, the pious were almost universally infected with the superstition of monasticism, by which they were led to think, that God could not be acceptably served in the common occupations of the world; and that in order to cultivate piety and be acceptable to God, it was necessary to retire into the solitude of the wilderness, or into the secluded recesses of a cloister. This mistake was one very natural to men who wished to spend their lives in communion with God, and who had learned to tread the riches, pleasures, and honours of the world beneath their feet. But they did not foresee the evils which afterwards grew up out of this system: and much less did they apprehend the danger of corruption to which these religious institutions were exposed. We must not



therefore judge of them, as if the whole history of monastic institutions had been present to their view as to ours. Indeed, very few persons in the fifth century seem to have doubted the piety and utility of such fraternities; and it need not be doubted, that while piety was fervent, and the members truly dead to the world, they furnished excellent opportunities of study and devotion. But the pious founders forgot that by flying from the world, they were leaving their proper field of labour; they were ceasing to be the "light of the world" and "the salt of the earth." They rather placed their light under a bushel, where it could not clearly shine forth upon a wicked and perverse generation.

Augustine, however, did not feel himself at liberty to remain in retirement; for after three years seclusion, like Paul, whom he resembled in many striking traits, he came forth to engage in the great work of preaching the word. He was ordained a presbyter at Hippo, a city not very remote from the place of his birth, and now called Bona, within the territory of the late Dey of Algiers. A number of the brethren that were associated with him, followed him to this new scene of his labours; and there he established another monastery; and the inmates appear to have been pious and distinguished men; for out of the number, no less than nine became bishops, who are said to have been bright ornaments of the African churches. He also founded a nunnery, of which he made his own sister, now a widow, the abbess; and after her death Felicitas, the oldest among the nuns, succeeded her; but a difference arising among the sisters, Augustine quelled it, by two letters to Felicitas, which are the 210th and 211th in the collection of his epistles. In these he exhorts them to prayer, to regularity, to poverty and to obedience to their abbess; and lays down a set of rules for their institution. Nearly the same were given to the brethren; and after his death they were borrowed by many monasteries, with additions and alterations. During Augustine's seclusion from the world his son Adeodatus, who had consecrated himself to God, departed this life. While in retirement, Augustine read the Holy Scriptures with inexpressible delight. He had in his youth, when enraptured with the style of Cicero, despised the meanness, as it appeared to him, of the Scriptures; but now when his judgment was more mature, when he was more conversant with them; and especially, when he had a heart to relish the precious truths of this divine repository; he found that the prophets and apostles far surpass in depth

of meaning all the sublimest orators of the heathen. He was now convinced that Paul in persuasive and forcible eloquence was superior to the greatest profane orators. They studied the ornaments of elocution; he never sought after them; but they naturally flowed from the wisdom with which his mind was fraught. In his noble simplicity there is more of the true sublime, in the opinion of Augustine, than in the highest strokes of art.

It may be proper here to relate more particularly how he was led from his retirement into the public ministry. There resided at Hippo an agent of the emperor, a man of great probity, who desired very much to converse with Augustine about the state of his own soul; and on this occasion he went to Hippo. Although for fear of being forced into the episcopal office he had avoided large towns; yet as this place was supplied with a bishop, he did not hesitate to obey the summons of the worthy man who wished to converse with him. It so happened, however, that Valerian, the bishop of this place, had told his flock, that there was a necessity of having a presbyter ordained to assist him in his charge, upon observing Augustine coming into the church they instantly laid hands on him, and brought him to Valerian, requesting that he might be ordained. Augustine, knowing the difficulties of that charge, burst into tears; but his resistance was ineffectual, and he was ordained presbyter about the end of the year 390. This custom of forcing pious men into the ministry had become very common in this age, as we learn from the case of Ambrose, and from the account given of certain persons by Chrysostom in his book "Of the Priesthood." Augustine now begged of Valerian a little indulgence, that he might have some time to make special preparation for the sacred office before he entered on its duties. In a letter addressed to his bishop, on this subject, he says, "There is nothing in the world more easy than the office of a bishop, priest or deacon, if it be performed in a slight, careless, and complying manner; but nothing really more miserable or more criminal and unjust in the sight of God. On the other hand, nothing in this life is more difficult, laborious, or dangerous than this office; but nothing more blessed in the sight of God, if it be discharged in the manner our Great Leader commandeth." He says that though he was formerly convinced of this truth, he now felt it much more sensibly than when he viewed it at a distance: and he feared that the Lord had called him into a tempest-

tuous sea to correct him and chastise him for his sins. How exquisitely he felt may be inferred from such language as the following, contained in this letter. "O my father, Valerius, do you command me to perish? Where is your charity? Do you love me? Do you love your church? I know you love both; but many things are wanting to me for the discharge of this employment, which cannot be attained, but as our Lord directs, by asking, seeking, knocking; that is, by reading, praying, weeping." It would seem from several circumstances, that his request for a respite was granted. Valerian being a Grecian, and having beside an impediment in his speech, made Augustine preach constantly to the people, even when he was present, which was unusual in the west, though common in the east. And as he considered this the main part of the ministerial office, he never ceased preaching regularly until the day of his death. Of his discourses, which are not regular orations, but homilies or familiar addresses, there are extant about four hundred; not all written by himself, but some were taken down by others. These sermons are in eloquence, greatly inferior to those of some of the Greek fathers; but were adapted to the genius of his hearers, who frequently heard such discourses with acclamations of applause, and were by them often melted into tears. Augustine perfectly understood all the rules of eloquence; and he gives excellent instructions on this subject to the younger preachers. He tells them to be natural and simple; that art must not be apparent; that a discourse too fine and elaborate, puts the hearers on their guard; and in religion he would have every thing to be plain and familiar, but not low or vulgar. He distinguishes three kinds of speaking: *submissively*, in an humble, familiar style; *mildly*, in an engaging, tender, and insinuating manner; and *nobly*, in a lofty, vehement strain, when we would captivate men and rescue them from the dominion of their passions. This latter kind, he would have characterized by pathetic emotions, rather than adorned with florid embellishments. A speaker who follows the natural train of his thoughts, seeks after no beauties of elocution, though he uses such as arise from the subject. Though in Augustine's time the Latin was greatly corrupted from the Augustan age, yet all good judges must acknowledge that his power of persuasion was very great. His knowledge of the human heart was profound, and his reasonings are commonly forcible, his sentiments often pathetic and sublime. His penetration into all that be-

longed to his subject, was probably never exceeded. But he fell too much into the allegorical method of interpreting the Scriptures, or rather illustrating his subject by this means. On this account the discourses of Jerome and Chrysostom, who went but little into this style, are more useful, as they apply the Scriptures in their literal sense. One reason which he assigns for making so much use of allegory, was to interest an uncultivated people; for such were the inhabitants of Hippo. He acknowledges that his discourses were not such as the rules of rhetoric required; but he said it was necessary to accommodate himself to the taste of the people, in order to be useful to them; and he relates in his letters to his friend Alipius several remarkable instances of the effect produced by his preaching, in reclaiming the people from some heathenish sports and customs, to which they devoted themselves at certain seasons of the year. When he could so get into their feelings as to bring them generally to tears, he was able usually to accomplish his purpose. His sermons were all delivered in Latin, but there were some in his flock who only understood the Punic language, for whom he found no small difficulty to obtain preachers to instruct them. As to the frequency of preaching, he commonly delivered a sermon every day, and on some days two; and this practice he continued all his life; and did not desist even when he was so weak as to be scarce able to speak: but his zeal gave him ardor in speaking; so that he could often forget his weakness and sicknesses, in his desire to save immortal souls. And his preaching was so acceptable, that when he went into other diocesses, he was always invited to feed the people with the bread of life; and wherever he went, his sermons were received with universal applause; which in that age was expressed by clappings and acclamations. As one instance of the power which attended his preaching, Possidius relates, that one day when speaking against the Manichæan heresy, one Firmus, a rich and powerful patron of the sect, happened to come into the house, who was so convinced and impressed by Augustine's discourse, that after the sermon he came and threw himself down at his feet, and bathed in tears, confessed his errors. This man was afterwards ordained to the ministry.

Valerius finding himself sinking under the weight of years and infirmities, continued a plan with Aurelius, archbishop of Carthage, to have Augustine advanced to the bishopric, as his co-adjutor. This plan he resisted as long as he could,



but was obliged to acquiesce, and was ordained bishop of Hippo in 395, when in the 42d year of his age. The next year Valerius died.

In his new dignity, though obliged to live in the episcopal palace, he continued his life of frugality and poverty; and induced all his clergy who resided with him, to renounce all property, and to embrace the rules which he had established; nor would he ordain any man, but upon this condition. This was the origin of Regular Canons; for many other bishops imitated his example. Still he exercised hospitality, but his table was extremely frugal. For strangers and the sick he would occasionally have flesh served up; and he did not prohibit a moderate use of wine, but he established a rule which prevented all excess. His dress was simple, but not slovenly. All the furniture of his house was plain and not costly: no silver, except spoons, was ever admitted.

His wish was to have reading or religious conversation; but against no vice did he set himself more resolutely, than against detraction; to prevent which he had written in legible characters, upon his table,

“*Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere vitam  
Hanc mensam indignam noverit esse sibi.*”

And if any one was guilty of this hateful vice in his presence, he would immediately leave the room.

As he had given his own patrimony to the poor, so now he bestowed on them all that could be saved from his revenue; and sometimes he would melt down the church plate to get money to redeem captives, in which he did but follow the example of Ambrose. But his desire for the spiritual and eternal welfare of his flock was great beyond expression.

Perhaps no man naturally possessed a more affectionate and friendly disposition than Augustine; but this was vastly improved and elevated by religion, or holy charity, of which his whole life was an exemplification.

It is difficult to say, whether he excelled more in courage or in prudence. In reprovng even the vices of rulers, he was fearless; but he was extremely solicitous to avoid unnecessary offence, and to administer reproof in such a manner, as would avoid doing more harm than good. Perhaps since the apostle's days a more perfect model of a good bishop and faithful pastor has not been witnessed. He scarcely ever made any other visits, but to orphans, widows, the sick and other distressed persons. He borrowed three rules from Ambrose which are worthy of being mentioned. They

were, to have no hand in making matches—never to persuade any man to become a soldier, and not to attend public feasts.

From his letters it appears that for much of the time his health was very infirm. Many interesting particulars of his life, and of the customs of the African churches, may be gathered from his numerous epistles. Indeed many of them are so long and elaborate, that they may rather be considered as treatises, than letters. In regard to the varying customs of different churches, in relation to ceremonies, feasts, and festivals, Augustine manifested a liberal and conciliatory spirit. He says in his letter to Casulanus, the church observes Wednesday and Friday as fasts, because on the first the Jews conspired against Christ, and on the last put him to death. And in regard to Saturday, he recommends the rule of Ambrose, who said to Monica, his mother, "When I am here (at Milan) I do not fast on Saturday; but when I am at Rome I do!" Follow, says Augustine, the custom of the place where you may happen to be. In regard to frequent communion, he says, in one of his epistles, "They do well who communicate daily, provided they do it worthily; but they are also to be commended who set apart particular days, as Sundays or Saturdays, for this holy service; in order to attend on it with greater devotion.

He gave a remarkable example of meekness and humility, in his controversy with Jerome. He conjures the latter by the meekness of Christ to pardon him in what he had unintentionally offended him; thankfully submits himself to his reprehension; professing that he was always ready to be taught by him as his master, and corrected by him as his censor, and offers to drop the subject in which they had differed in opinion. And in another letter he says, "I entreat you again and again, to correct me confidently, when you perceive me to stand in need of it; for though the office of a bishop be greater than that of a priest, yet in many things is Augustine inferior to Jerome." And he generously takes upon himself the whole blame of the dispute which had arisen between them; which related to the conduct of Peter at Antioch for which he was reproved by Paul, and to the lawfulness of observing Jewish ceremonies after the institution of the Christian church. Jerome had explained the conduct of Peter mentioned in the epistle to the Galatians, as if it had been a mere collusion between him and Paul, and as if Paul did not think Peter guilty of any fault; because he allowed of Jewish ceremonies

as well as he did. This opinion Augustine opposed and refuted by irrefragable arguments. This letter miscarried by reason of the death of the messenger; and he wrote another which was long detained on the way, and when it reached Jerome it gave him serious offence. But afterwards he came over to Augustine's opinion, which has been since universally received.

The eminent piety of Augustine may be learned from the book of his "Confessions," much more satisfactorily than from any description. There is perhaps no uninspired production, in which the lineaments of the true Christian are more distinctly exhibited. Still his book contains things which had better been omitted. It was written about the year 407, shortly before Augustine was ordained bishop. His object in publishing it seems to have been his own humiliation, and the mortification of pride and vain-glory. Against these sins he was perpetually on his guard; and seems to have dreaded applause more than censure, and the caresses of the world more than its persecutions.

Having exhibited the character of Augustine as a pastor and bishop, it is proper that some account should be given of him as a strenuous and able defender of the faith. A large part of his writings are polemical, and it is believed, that in this field he has never had a superior among uninspired men.

Having been for many years entangled in the errors of the Manichaeans, after his conversion he took much pains to oppose this sect. And when he was introduced to the ministry at Hippo, finding many of the people led astray by these errors, he challenged Fortunatus, their preacher, to a public conference, which was accepted, and the discussion lasted two days. The dispute principally respected the origin of evil, which Augustine asserted, proceeded from the free-will of man; and so pressed his adversary with his arguments, that he was unable to reply, and said he would consult the leaders of the sect on the difficulties proposed. Though an able disputant, he had been so completely foiled in this controversy, that he left Hippo, and most of his followers were brought to embrace the catholic faith. Faustus, a bishop among the Manichees in Africa, was the idol of the sect. He was a man of extraordinary eloquence and address, and by the affected modesty of his behaviour, and insinuating address, perverted many from the belief of the truth. Some account has already been given of Augustine's conferences with this man at Carthage, while he was yet a Manichee; it

will now be the proper time to mention the controversy which arose between them. About the year 390, Faustus published a book full of blasphemies against the law and the prophets; and against the mystery of the incarnation. Beausobre speaks highly of the elegance of his style, which is lively, perspicuous, concise, and smooth; superior in the purity of the Latin tongue to most productions of the age. To this work Augustine returned an answer in three and twenty books, about the year 400, in which he triumphed over his antagonist both in the solidity of his arguments, and the extent of his learning. And he has transmitted to us the text of his adversary's book, which otherwise would have been buried in oblivion.

His next controversy on this heresy was with one Felix, who was of the number of the *elect*, among the Manichees, and came to Hippo to revive the sect, which since Augustine's settlement there, had become almost extinct. With this man he held a public conference for three days; the proceedings of the first is lost, but those of the second and third are preserved. The result of this dispute was uncommon. Felix, at the close, publicly acknowledged the errors of Manes, and embraced the catholic faith.

His next controversy was with the Priscillianists, whose errors were akin to those of the Manichees, as they held that the human soul was of a divine nature, and was sent into the body as a punishment for the transgressions of a former state; and that after it is sufficiently purified, it will be restored again. This sect had spread itself in Spain; where also the errors of the Originists prevailed. Orosius, a pious presbyter of that country, took a voyage to Africa to obtain the aid of Augustine, to repress these heretical opinions; for his fame had spread widely over the church. This occasioned his work against the Priscillianists and Originists, in which he refutes the errors above mentioned, and others of a similar kind.

He next entered the lists with the Arians, who had become very insolent, since the invasion of Africa by the Goths and Vandals, who were mostly inclined to Arianism. He held a public controversy with count Pascentius, the steward of the imperial demesnes in Africa; but the count would not agree that notaries should take it down. Pascentius demanded of him to show him the term "consubstantial" in the Scriptures. Augustine answered by asking him to show the phrase "not-begotten" which he used.



Maximinus, an Arian bishop, challenged Augustine to a public conference, which was held in 428, and is still extant, as it was taken down in writing.

Augustine also wrote against Judaism; demonstrating that the Mosaic law was to have an end, and to be succeeded by a new law, that is by Christianity.

In the neighbouring city of Madaura, Paganism still prevailed, and idolatry was practised. Augustine having conciliated the favour of that city, by some signal services which he had it in his power to perform towards them, attempted their conversion to Christianity, and many of them were induced to embrace the faith of Christ.

His great work, "*De Civitate Dei*," "*Of the City of God*," he commenced in 413, but it was not finished until 426.

But the sect which made the greatest figure in Africa at this time, was that of the Donatists. It took its rise about forty years before Augustine was born, as may be seen in the history of Optatus. They were condemned as schismatics by two councils, the one at Rome 313, and the other at Arles in 314. They maintained that the catholic church had become so corrupt in discipline, that it ceased to be a true church; and, therefore, that all the sacraments administered in said church were null, and of no effect; whence they re-baptized all who came over to them from the catholic church. All the emperors from Constantine enacted severe laws against them, but still they prevailed in many places; but their greatest strength was in Africa, where they had many hundreds of churches. In Numidia they were very numerous; but so divided among themselves, that no one could tell how many sects of them there were. And some of these sects became absolutely mad; I believe the world cannot furnish a parallel to the obstinacy and insane fury of the Circumcelliones. At Hippo, they were far more numerous than the catholics, when Augustine settled there; and he found it necessary to direct much of his attention to this schismatic body: for their violence and injustice towards the catholics were, in many instances, outrageous. On one occasion, a little before Augustine came to Hippo, Faustinus, the Donatist bishop, forbid any bread to be baked for the catholics, and was obeyed even by servants of that sect, who lived in catholic families. When Augustine set himself to oppose them they were so enraged, that they publicly declared, that whosoever should kill him, would be doing God service; and on more than one occasion his life was in imminent dan-

ger; and once he providentially escaped their ambush, by his guide missing the way; for which deliverance he gave thanks to God publicly. In the year 405, he was obliged to apply to Cecilian, vicar of Africa, to restrain the Donatists about Hippo, from their outrages: and in 407, Honorius commissioned lawyers, under the title of "Defensors" of the church, to prosecute the Donatists, by enforcing the laws.

In the year 411, Marcellinus, by order of the emperor Honorius, appointed a conference to be held at Carthage between eighteen Donatist and as many catholic bishops; but subsequently it was agreed that only seven on each side should take part in the discussion. On the part of the orthodox, Augustine was pre-eminently distinguished above every other speaker. Marcellinus, who presided in this conference as the deputy of the emperor, gave a decision, in regard to matters of fact, which were here brought forward, which was altogether in favour of the catholic church; and he sent to Honorius a full account of all the proceedings; which led to the adoption of more severe laws against the Donatists. Another result of this public conference was, that multitudes of people forsook them, and came over to the catholic church; so that the schism of the Donatists declined from this time. When their bishops joined the church, they were confirmed in their offices, as had been decreed in the council of Carthage in 407. But those who remained obstinate, became more outrageous and insolent than ever; and were frequently subjected to severe punishments from the civil authority. In several instances, Augustine interceded for them when condemned by the judges, and obtained a remission or mitigation of their sentence. He was greatly afflicted at the cruel execution of his friend Marcellinus and others, by Marinus, the general who had been sent to quell the rebellion raised by Heracleian the proconsul. When Augustine heard that Marcellinus was brought into suspicion, by the accusation of the Donatists, he went to Carthage, and obtained from Marinus a promise that his friend should not suffer; but notwithstanding, he ordered him to be decapitated soon afterwards. The emperor disgraced Marinus for this cruel act; but it could not restore the life of the excellent man whom he had destroyed.

But it is time that we should give some account of the part which Augustine took in the Pelagian controversy, in which the last years of his life were greatly occupied.

Pelagius is said to have been a native of Bangor in Wales;

but travelled into Italy and resided a long time at Rome, where his character for learning and piety stood high. Some have asserted that his errors were imbibed from Rufin, with whom he fell into acquaintance at Rome. For some time he dissembled his opinions; but after a while he began to insinuate his errors into the minds of many by interrogatories, rather than by assertions. His principal disciple was Celestius, a man of good family, of ready wit, and both subtle and bold. This man was a native of Scotland, as we learn from Jerome, who in his usual abusive style calls him "a fellow bloated with Scotch gruels." He was at first a lawyer, but became afterwards a monk. While Pelagius himself went into the east, Celestius remained in Carthage; and sought admission to the priesthood: but his design was laid open to Aurelius by Paulinus a presbyter of Milan, who happened to be there, and accused him of heresy. The opinions with which he was charged were, "That Adam would have been equally mortal and would have died, though he had not sinned—That his sin was prejudicial to himself alone, not to his posterity—That children are now born just in the same state they would have been, had not Adam transgressed—And that without baptism they may receive eternal life. He was tried and condemned as an obstinate heretic. Augustine was not present at the council which pronounced this sentence, but from this time he set himself to oppose the errors of Pelagius, both in his sermons and his letters: and before the end of the year he published his first treatise against them; which he did without naming the authors of this heresy. And in another book, he even praised Pelagius by name, while he wrote against his errors, saying, "I hear he is a holy man, very much improved in Christian virtue; a good man and worthy of praise." But after his condemnation he was accused by Orosius and other fathers, as a man fond of banquets and luxuries. This heresiarch made a long stay in Palestine; and in 415 was accused of heresy before a council at Jerusalem, who wrote for advice to the bishop of Rome. But in the same year fourteen bishops met at Diospolis, and Pelagius being called before them, made such explanations, and put such a gloss on the words which he had used, that they acquitted him of holding the errors with which he was charged; but they condemned these errors as heretical. He was much elated by the decision of this council, but did not publish the proceedings, or it would have been seen that he disowned his errors. He therefore circulated an epistle, in

which he boasted that fourteen bishops had determined that man was able to keep all the commandments of God, and to live without sin; but he omitted to say, that in the council he said, he could do this *by the grace of God*; and in his letter inserted the word *easily*, which he dared not use in the council.

The bishops of Africa were too well acquainted with the errors of Pelagius and Celestius, to be imposed on by their artful glosses. Two councils were held in relation to this heresy in 416; the one at Carthage, the other at Melevum, in both of which these men were condemned; and both of them forwarded an account of their proceedings to Innocent, bishop of Rome; by whom they were both excommunicated from the communion of the church. Pelagius wrote a letter to Innocent in his own vindication: and Celestius who had been ordained a presbyter at Ephesus hastened to Rome to defend himself. In the meantime Innocent departed this life, and was succeeded by Zosimus, in March, 417. To him Celestius presented a confession of his faith, and professed his willingness, if in error, to be set right. Zosimus was so much deceived by his plausible statements, that he wrote in his favour to the African bishops: but would not remove the sentence of excommunication under which they had laid him. In the meantime Aurelius assembled at Carthage a council of two hundred and fourteen bishops, in 418, who renewed the sentence of excommunication. As soon as Zosimus had received letters of information from this council, which condemned the Pelagians, he cited Celestius to appear before him; but he secretly withdrew from Rome, and travelled into the east. The civil power was also called in to give force to the condemnation of these men. Honorius and Theodosius made an edict to be published throughout the empire, by which they banished Pelagius and Celestius, and all who adhered to their doctrines. In Italy eighteen bishops refused to concur in the sentence of condemnation passed by Zosimus on these men. The principal of them was Julian, a bishop of Campania, who was a man of learning and wit, and wrote with much ease and force; but was beyond measure vain, and held all who differed from him in contempt.

It is well understood, that the heresy of Pelagius consisted in a denial of original sin, and consequently of the supernatural grace of God; and that a man could live without sin. The contrary of these opinions, Augustine maintained with invincible force of reasoning. That men should be inclined to Pelagianism by nature, results from the pride of the human



heart; which leads men to think too highly of their own powers and virtues. It is not wonderful, therefore, that this heresy found many advocates. And had it not been for this eminent defender of the doctrines of grace, who stood as a bulwark for the truth, it would have prevailed more extensively. He was also like a watchman on the walls of a city, who gave seasonable warning of the danger to his brethren in the ministry, and to the church; and was the animating soul of all their councils; and gave energy to all their exertions to extinguish the rising flame. To him principally, under God, is the church indebted for the overthrow of this dangerous heresy.

Out of the ashes of Pelagianism sprang Semipelagianism, which had its principal seat about Marseilles, in Gaul. Prosper and Hilary, two learned laymen, informed Augustine that all his other works were held in high admiration; but that many considered his doctrine of grace as offensive and dangerous, because to them it seemed to destroy free will in man. They taught that the first desire of good originated in the creature, and that by this incipient exercise of faith God was moved to bestow all that was necessary to enable him to perform good works. And in regard to those who die in infancy, or are remote from the means of salvation, God foresaw that they would not make a good use of these means, and therefore deprived them of them. In answer to these errors, Augustine wrote two books; the one concerning the "Predestination of the Saints," the other on the "Gift of Perseverance," in which he showed that the abettors of these new opinions did not recede from the radical principles of Pelagius; and that to ascribe to the creature the beginning of faith and holiness, is to give him the whole, and to take away all the honour from God. But Augustine treats the Semipelagians as brethren, because they erred not with obstinacy; and as yet their errors were uncondemned by the authority of the church. The persons who were most conspicuous as the supporters of this system, were Cassian at Marseilles, and Faustus abbot of Lerisis, and afterward bishop of Ries; of whom several works are still extant. He died in the year 480. The Semipelagian heresy was condemned in the council of Orange in 529, and the sentence confirmed by Boniface II. in a letter to Caesarius.

Of the works of Augustine, his "Confessions" and his "Retractions," do him most honour. Of the first something has already been said. The latter he began in 425, in the

seventy-second year of his age; it contains a review of his writings, and an impartial censure of such things as now appeared to him to be incorrect; and so uncommon is his candour, that he never attempts to excuse himself, or to give the least favourable gloss to the errors which he had ever entertained; but with unsparing severity pronounces the sentence of condemnation on himself. In this same year, he proposed to this flock, to chose as a colleague Eradius, the youngest of his presbyters, but a person of great virtue and prudence; and accordingly he was elected to the episcopal office Sept. 26, 426; but as the canons forbade that two bishops be ordained over the same city, he was not consecrated until his death; but he requested the people henceforth to address themselves unto Eradius in all their concerns.

Augustine lived to see the miserable devastation of his country by the Vandal Genseric, who sailed from Spain into Africa in 428, with an army of eighty thousand men. Possidius, who was an eye-witness, describes the horrors produced by the invasion of these barbarians in affecting language. In many places the churches were burnt, or razed to the ground, so that Christians had to worship in private houses; and many churches were without ministers, as the clergy were often obliged to fly, as being the chief objects of persecution: and those who were not driven away from their flocks, were stripped of every thing and left in a state of beggary. And of the great number of churches in Africa, there were no more than three remaining, whose cities were not laid in ruins; and these were Carthage, Cirtha, and Hippo where Augustine was. The most shocking cruelties were exercised towards many of the bishops. Amidst these horrible desolations, Augustine was consulted by a bishop named Quodvultdeus and others, whether it was lawful for bishops or other clergymen to fly and leave their flocks upon the approach of these barbarians. His answer was, that when the pastor only was the object of their malice, and not the people, it was lawful for him to fly; or when the flock are all driven away, there is no reason why he should remain. In all other cases, he says, pastors are bound to watch over their flock, which Christ has committed to them; neither can they forsake it without a crime; which opinion he supports by a zeal and charity of the most fervent kind. Augustine was deeply affected with the evils with which his country and the church were desolated; for he considered not merely the outward calamities of the people, but also the ruin of a mul-

titude of souls, that was likely to ensue; and prayed often and fervently, that God would deliver his country; or would give his servants constancy and resignation; and entreated that God would take him to himself, that he might not be a witness of so great evils. He spoke much to his people on the duty of resignation to the divine will, under all these scourges, which their sins deserved. The Roman general, count Boniface, having been defeated in battle, fled to Hippo, which was the strongest fortress in the country; where also Possidius, and several bishops took refuge. The Vandals appeared before the city about the end of May, 430, and besieged it by land and sea. The siege continued for fourteen months. In the third month Augustine was seized with a fever; and from the first moment of his illness, doubted not that it was God's summons to call him to himself. Death had been long the chief subject of his meditations; and now when that event was near, he said, "We have a merciful God." He often spoke of the resignation and joy of Ambrose, in his last moments. And often referred to a story told by Cyprian, of a certain bishop, who believed that Christ spoke to him in a vision and said, "You are afraid to suffer here, and unwilling to go hence, what shall I do with you?" He also mentioned the words of another bishop, who, when told that perhaps he might recover, said, "If I must die once, why not now?" "What love of Christ can that be," said he, "to fear lest he whom we love should come?"—"Are we not ashamed to say we love, whilst we are afraid lest he come?" The desires of his soul after the glory of heaven were too great to be restrained. "Then," said he, "shall we bend to him the whole attention, and all the affections of our souls,—and we shall behold him face to face—we shall behold and love—we shall love and praise."—"Till I shall come, till I appear before him, I cease not to weep, and these tears are sweet to me as food. With this thirst, with which I am consumed, with which I am ardently carried towards the fountain of my love, whilst my joy is delayed, I continually burn more and more vehemently. In prosperity no less than adversity, I pour forth my ardent desires with tears." He redoubled his ardour in these holy breathings, as he drew nearer to his end; and prepared for eternity by the most humble contrition. In his last illness, he ordered the penitential psalms of David to be transcribed on tablets, and hung around his chamber; and as he lay sick he read them with abundance of tears. That he might not

be interrupted by too many visitants, about ten days before his death he gave orders that no one should be admitted to his chamber, except at the times when the physicians visited him, or when his food was brought to him. This rule was observed, and he spent all his time in devotional exercises. His senses and intellectual faculties continued sound to the last. His death occurred on the 28th of August, 430, having lived seventy-six years; forty of which were spent in the ministry. He made no will, because he had no property to bequeath. It was believed, that it was in answer to his fervent prayers, when on his death-bed, that the city of Hippo was preserved from capture and desolation by the Vandals; for after besieging it for fourteen months, they raised the siege and went off; and in many other cases his prayers were remarkably answered, which the Roman catholic writers have magnified into miracles. But although Hippo escaped the ravages of the barbarians for the present; yet when count Boniface had fought another unsuccessful battle with them, the inhabitants fearing the worst, forsook the place, and sought an asylum in other countries; so that when they came, they found little else than bare walls and empty houses.

Augustine's authority has been great in the church, in proportion as evangelical truth has been valued. Although numerous popes have given their sanction to his doctrines; yet the major part of the Romish church have declined into Semipelagianism; and the church for a long time past has evaded giving any decisive opinions on the disputes which have arisen between the Dominicans and Molinists, the Jansenists and Jesuits.

The Reformers were, with one accord, admirers of Augustine. He may be said to have prescribed the creed of Protestants. Luther affirms, that since the apostle's time the church never had a better teacher than Augustine. Calvin, it is known to all, adopted his whole doctrinal system, with the exception of a few particulars of no great consequence; and what is now denominated Calvinism, deserves rather to be called Augustinism. Dr. Cave says, "he was a man far beyond all that ever were before him, or shall in likelihood come after him, both for divine and human learning; those being excepted that were inspired." Dr. Field calls him "The greatest of the fathers, and the worthiest divine the church of God ever had since the apostles' time." Mr. Fo- rester styles him "The prince of the fathers." And the celebrated Brucker, in his "Critical History of Philosophy,"



asserts, "that he was much superior to all the other great men, who adorned that most learned age in which he flourished." The same learned author, in another place, styles him "The bright star of philosophy." And although Erasmus did not come up to the high standard of Augustine's orthodoxy; yet he gives an ample testimony to his character. He calls him "The singularly excellent father, and the chief among the greatest ornaments and lights of the church."

And if it be inquired, on what foundation did the superior excellence of this father rest, we may learn from his own writings, that it was HUMILITY. "Attempt not," says he, "to attain true wisdom, by any other way than what God hath enjoined; and that is, in the first, second, and third place, HUMILITY. And this I would answer as often as you ask me. Not that there are not other precepts; but unless humility goes before, accompanies and follows after, all that we do well is snatched out of our hands by pride. As Demosthenes, the prince of orators, being asked, which among the precepts of eloquence was to be observed first, is said to have answered, PRONUNCIATION, or delivery; again, which second? PRONUNCIATION: and which third? nothing else, said he, but PRONUNCIATION. And if you ask me concerning the precepts of the Christian religion, I should answer you, nothing but HUMILITY. Our Lord Jesus Christ was made so low, in order to teach us this humility." (*Epist. ad Diosc.*)

After so long and favourable an account of this eminent father, candour requires that we should add, that he adopted many of the popular superstitions which had crept into the church before his time. We have already spoken of his fondness for monastic institutions; this species of devotion and deadness to the world, seems to have been almost universally embraced in this age: and the few who entertained a different opinion were considered to be the enemies of the most elevated piety. And with this was connected an exalted opinion of a life of celibacy. This by some was carried so far, that marriage ceased to be reckoned honourable. Augustine, however, vindicated this sacred institution from the objections of some in his day; but at the same time he maintained that celibacy was a more perfect state, and more pleasing to God. It had become common to offer up prayers to the dead; and this he did very fervently, in relation to his deceased mother; but the custom also was to pray for the dead; which practice seems to be connected with a belief in some intermediate state, in which their condition is not un-

changeable, nor their bliss complete: for if the departed were supposed to be certainly in heaven or in hell, there would be no encouragement to pray for them. Augustine, therefore, may be supposed to entertain an obscure opinion of a purgatory; or of a state in which separate spirits might receive benefit from the prayers of pious people on earth. And he avows his belief that all the saints intercede for us in heaven, and therefore we may request their prayers in our behalf. Augustine also had imbibed the superstitious notion that miracles were often wrought by the relics of the martyrs and saints, a thing of which there is not a vestige in the New Testament. Of course, wherever this opinion was entertained, every such relic would be precious and venerable, and would be sought after with solicitude. And hence the innumerable and disgraceful frauds by which the credulous and ignorant have long been imposed on, and religion rendered ridiculous in the eyes of the world.

Augustine, though more liberal and conciliatory than most of the fathers, in regard to ceremonies, as we have seen; yet partook of the common sentiment of his age, that an observance of fasts and festivals, at the appointed seasons, was of great importance. In doctrinal opinions also, he fell into some errors of a minor kind, only one of which shall be now mentioned. He believed, agreeably to Scripture, that all the elect of God would certainly be saved; and that none of these would fall entirely away. But at the same time, it was his opinion, that others might be truly converted and believe for a while, and then turn back unto perdition. The same opinion seems to have been held by Luther and Melancthon, as appears from an article in the Augsburg Confession; which has misled even doctors in the Lutheran church. And others have not known how to reconcile Luther's opinions, with one another; from not adverting to this Augustinian tenet, which doubtless he had adopted.

The best edition of Augustine's Works is that of the Benedictine's, in eleven folio volumes. As they are accessible it seems to be unnecessary to give a list of the many treatises which compose them. If they were more studied, we should have more mature theologians, and more able defenders of the faith.

## NOTICES OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

## No. I.

*A Discussion of the Question, "Is the Roman Catholic Religion, in any or in all of its Principles or Doctrines, inimical to Civil or Religious Liberty?" And of the Question, "Is the Presbyterian Religion in any or in all of its Principles or Doctrines, inimical to Civil or Religious Liberty?"* By the Reverend JOHN HUGHES, of the Roman Catholic Church, and the Reverend JOHN BRECKINRIDGE, of the Presbyterian Church. Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Blanchard. pp. 546. 1836.

THIS volume ought to be read by every friend to the civil and religious liberty of his country. The question, whether "the Roman Catholic Religion in any or in all of its principles or doctrines, is inimical" to our rights as citizens or as Christians, is a question to which no thinking man can be indifferent. Nor can we suppose that any thinking man, after perusing these pages, can hesitate a moment to answer it in the affirmative. This we will venture to say Dr. Breckinridge has shown with perfect demonstration; while the attempts of Mr. Hughes to refute the charge, appears to us among the most uncandid, unfair, and egregious failures we ever read. On the whole, we think that every impartial reader of this volume will be of the opinion, on the one hand, that the Protestant advocate has done himself lasting honour by the able manner in which he has accomplished his task; and on the other hand, that the representative of Popery, in the true spirit of the system which he attempts to defend, is in a great measure regardless of all legitimate argument, and of all true history. It will be seen that Mr. Hughes finally retreated from the controversy, and made use of every artifice to prevent its publication in a manner which manifested any thing but a consciousness of victory.

The only design of this short notice is to announce to our readers the appearance of the volume before us, and to recommend it to their attention. It is our purpose to give a more extended review of it in our next number.

## No. II.

MEMOIR OF THE REV. JOSEPH SANFORD, A. M. *Pastor of the second Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia.* By ROBERT BAIRD. pp. 268. 12mo. Philadelphia: Henry Perkins, 1836.

THIS is an interesting memoir of a most excellent man. The Rev. Mr. Baird, now in Paris, has found time, amidst his important and pressing avocations, to prepare for the press a volume which cannot fail to give mournful pleasure to all who peruse it. He has drawn his materials chiefly from the best of all sources,—from the private papers left by the deceased, in which he recorded facts, and breathed out the feelings of his heart, without a thought of their ever meeting the public eye. We feel indebted to the compiler for this “labour of love;” and cannot doubt that many readers will be both instructed and edified by the rich, unstudied effusion of pious sentiment from the pen of Mr. Sanford with which the volume abounds.

We forbear to make extracts from the work, or even to give a condensed view of the narrative which it contains, hoping that all our readers will take the earliest opportunity of procuring the volume, and perusing the whole.

## No. III.

*The Eldership of the Presbyterian Church. A Sermon preached before the Charleston Union Presbytery, April 4, 1836, by the Rev. THOMAS SMITH, Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, Charleston, S. C.* 8vo. pp. 33. Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1836.

THIS is no common-place or superficial Sermon. Mr. Smith treats the subject which he undertakes to discuss in a thorough and able manner, and has made to his readers a truly valuable present. The true character and appropriate duties of the office of Ruling Elder have been so long misapprehended and undervalued, that it is a task of no ordinary difficulty and will probably take much time to bring public sentiment to a proper bearing in relation to this subject.



Some of the most important functions of Elders are, like those of ministers of the gospel, self-denying, and adapted to put in requisition all their piety, and all their zeal for the spiritual welfare of men. We believe the time has come when holding up to view these functions, as both binding and important, ought to be constantly and faithfully attended to, by every pastor of the Presbyterian church. And we will venture to say, that the more successful any pastor is in establishing the doctrine of this discourse the more he will find his labours aided and sustained; his hands strengthened; his burdens lightened; and his whole ministry rendered more comfortable and more useful. We feel indebted to Mr. Smith for the good service which he has rendered, by delivering and publishing this discourse, to the cause of ecclesiastical order, and christian edification.

If we could convince all our Ruling Elders, that their office constitutes them colleagues and helpers of pastors in every part of their spiritual and supervising work, *save only the duty of public preaching, and the administration of the sacraments*, we should witness a new and glorious era in the Presbyterian church. Will not our pastors take so much interest in the comfort and efficiency of their own ministry, as to enter into the spirit of the office of the Eldership, and inculcate it without ceasing on all whom it may concern?

We wish there was a copy of Mr. Smith's Sermon in the hands of every Ruling Elder in the United States.

#### No. IV.

1. *Address at the interment of ROBERT RALSTON, Esquire, August 13th, 1836.* By ASHBEL GREEN, D. D. 8vo. pp. 23. Philadelphia: William S. Martien, 1836.
2. *Believers Sojourners on Earth, and Expectants of Heaven: a Sermon occasioned by the death of ROBERT RALSTON, Esquire, who died in Philadelphia on the 11th of August, 1836, in the seventy-fifth year of his age. Preached in the Second Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, August 21st, 1836.* By CORNELIUS C. CUYLER, D.D., Pastor of the Church. 8vo. pp. 40. William S. Martien, 1836.

SUCH an example of a Christian merchant as that of ROBERT RALSTON, is seldom, very seldom contemplated. And when it has passed from public view, he who portrays it, and leaves an appropriate memorial of it for the benefit of posterity, renders an important service to the church and the world. We, therefore, feel indebted to Dr. Green and Dr. Cuyler for the pamphlets before us. The former, after an intimate and endeared friendship with the deceased of nearly fifty years continuance; and the latter, after an affectionate friendship, such as an enlightened, pious and benevolent pastor might be expected to cherish—have concurred in erecting a monument to the memory of one of the best of men. These discourses do honour to the hearts as well as the heads of their authors. We could wish that every professing Christian in the land would place them in his closet, and peruse them every three months, as long as he lives; and that parents, in training up their sons for active and public life, would say to them, pointing to the portraits here presented—“REMEMBER ROBERT RALSTON.”









